

# THE DIAL

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## TRISTAN

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*Translated from the German by Scofield Thayer  
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SO this is the Einfried Sanatorium! White and rectilinear, with its expanse of main buildings and side wings, it lies in the centre of a broad park that is delightfully fitted out with grottoes, arbours, and pavilions made of bark. And above and beyond the slate roofs, the hills rise bulkily against the sky. They are green with pines, and gently irregular.

This institution is still run by Dr Leander. With his black, double-pointed beard, which is as coarse and matted as the horse-hair used for stuffing furniture, with his thick, glistening spectacles and his air of having been chilled by science, hardened, and filled with a subdued, cautious pessimism—with all this he maintains a forceful and conclusive jurisdiction over his patients. His patients—items that were too weak to make laws for themselves and keep them, but had given themselves completely over to him that they might gain support from his rigidity.

As to Fräulein von Osterloh—she functions with an unwearying devotion as housekeeper. Great heavens! how urgently she keeps on rushing up stairs and down stairs, from one end of the institute to the other! She has charge of the kitchen and the store-room, goes through the wash, gives orders to the servants, and sets the table of the establishment from the standpoints of economy, health, tastiness, and of the outward appearance of things. She manages with an agitated meticulousness; and in her excessive industry there lies concealed a steady reproach for the whole world of men, since

it has not yet occurred to any one of them to take her with him. But in two round crimson spots, the unextinguishable hope glows on her cheeks of ultimately becoming the wife of Dr Leander. . . .

Ozone, and quiet, quiet air . . . in spite of anything Dr Leander's detractors and rivals may say to the contrary, Einfried is to be most warmly recommended for consumptives. But there are not only tubercular patients here; there are all sorts of inmates, men, women, and even children. Dr Leander has results to offer in any number of fields. There are people here with stomach trouble, as for instance the wife of Magistrate Spatz, who in addition has something wrong with her ears. There are gentlemen with bad hearts, paralytics, sufferers from rheumatism and all stages of nervous disorder. One diabetic general is consuming his pension here with a ceaseless grumbling. Several men with fleshless faces jerk their legs about in an uncontrolled manner which by no means augurs well. One woman of fifty, the wife of a Pastor Höhlenrauch, has brought nineteen children into the world and is completely out of her head; still, she has no peace, but has been wandering miserably and aimlessly through the whole house for a year now, resting silent and staring on the arm of her private nurse, and driven by vague unrest.

There is an occasional death among the "serious cases," who lie in their rooms and do not make their appearance either at meal times or in the drawing-room . . . and no one, not even the occupant of the adjoining room, is aware of it. The waxen guest is removed in the dead of night, and the activities in Einfried continue undisturbed: the rub-downs, the electric treatments, the injections, the showers, baths, exercises, sweating, deep breathing, all in different places and with the most up-to-date equipment.

Yes, everything is full of life, even here. The institute is in bloom. At the entrance to the side wing, the porter sounds the large bell when new guests arrive. And Dr Leander, together with Fräulein von Osterloh, accompanies in all formality to their cabs those who are leaving. Just what kind of creature has not put up at Einfried! There is even an author here, an eccentric man, who bears the name of some mineral or jewel, and is stealing days from the Lord God. . . .

Furthermore, besides Dr Leander, there is a second physician, for the minor cases and the hopeless ones. But his name is Müller. and he is really not worth mentioning.

## II

In the beginning of January the wholesale merchant Klöterjahn—of the firm A. C. Klöterjahn & Co.—brought his wife to Einfried; and Fräulein von Osterloh received them after their long journey in the reception-room on the ground floor, which was fitted out in a marvellously pure Empire style like nearly all of the distinctive old house. Almost immediately Dr Leander also appeared; he bowed, and a conversation was begun, during which both parties came to an understanding.

Outside, out in the winter, was the park with its covered flower beds, its snowed up grottoes, and lonely little temples. And two servants were bringing in the trunk of the new guests from the cab which stood in the street in front of the big iron door—since there was no approach up to the house.

"Slowly, Gabrielle, take care, my angel, and keep your mouth closed," Herr Klöterjahn had said as he helped his wife through the park; and whoever saw them could not help being deeply moved by this *take care*—which was spoken in English—even though it cannot be denied that Herr Klöterjahn might have said it in plain, simple German.

The driver who had brought them from the station to the sanatorium, a crude, ignorant man without any of the finer feelings, had bitten his tongue in powerless caution while the wholesale merchant was helping his wife to descend; yes, it even seemed as though these two sturdy bays, shivering in the silent cold and with their eyes rolled back, were following the anxious procedure with suspense, full of misgiving for so much frail gracefulness and such tender charm.

The young woman was suffering with her trachea, as it had been expressly stated in the first letter which Herr Klöterjahn had sent to the head physician of Einfried from the shore of the Baltic—and thank God, it was not her lungs! But even if it had been her lungs, this new patient could not have had a sweeter or a nobler look, could not have appeared more removed or incorporeal, than now. Close by her robust husband, she followed the conversation, lying back faint and weary in the white lacquered arm-chair, with its strong straight lines.

Her lovely pale hands, entirely bare except for a slender wedding-ring, were lying in her lap, in the folds of a dark heavy woolen

coat. And she wore a tight-fitting silver-grey shirt waist, with a close high collar covered with velvet embroidery. But these warm, heavy stuffs only made the unutterable weariness of her little head seem all the more appealing. Her light brown hair was gathered low in the back; it was combed smooth; and only near the right temple one stray curling strand fell across her forehead, not far from the place over her distinctly traced eyebrow where a peculiar tiny vein, pale blue and sickly, branched across the clearness and purity of an almost transparent forehead. This little blue vein over the one eye commanded in a disturbing fashion the whole fine oval of her face. It protruded more noticeably as soon as the woman began to speak, and gave an effect of exertion to her face, or even of distress, awaking uncertain apprehensions. Nevertheless, she spoke, and smiled. She spoke easily and amiably in a lightly veiled voice, and she smiled with her somewhat listless eyes. Yes, now and then they showed the least inclination to bulge, and the corners, on either side of the narrow bridge of her nose, lay in a deep shadow. Her beautiful wide mouth was pale, and yet it seemed brilliant, owing to the fact, perhaps, that her lips were demarcated with such exceptional sharpness and clarity. She would cough occasionally. At such times she put her handkerchief to her lips and examined it afterwards.

"Don't cough, Gabriele," Herr Klöterjahn said. "You know how Dr Hinzpeter back home warned you especially against it, *darling*, and all you have to do is just hold back, my angel. As I said," he repeated, "it is the trachea. When it began, I really thought it was the lungs, and God knows I was frightened. But it wasn't the lungs, nah, not-on-your-life; we don't fall for anything like that, eh, Gabriele? He he!"

"Beyond a doubt," Dr Leander said, and glistened on them with his glasses.

Whereupon Herr Klöterjahn requested coffee, coffee and rolls—and he had such a vivid way of pronouncing it half swallowed, that you couldn't help feeling an appetite.

He got what he wanted, got also rooms for himself and his wife, and they installed themselves.

Furthermore, Dr Leander took over the case himself, without consulting Dr Müller.



## III

The new patient created an unusual stir in Einfried, and Herr Klöterjahn, who was accustomed to such successes, accepted with satisfaction every respect that was paid her. The diabetic general stopped grumbling for a moment the first time he saw her; the gentlemen with the fleshless faces smiled, and attempted desperately to control their legs when they were near her; and the Magistratsrätin Spatz immediately attached herself as an elder friend. Indeed, she made quite an impression, this woman who bore Herr Klöterjahn's name! An author who had been spending his time in Einfried for some weeks now, a distant sort—his name sounded like the name of some jewel—coloured noticeably as she passed him in the corridor; he stood still as though rooted there, even after she had disappeared.

Within two days everyone in the sanatorium knew her history. She was born in Bremen, a fact, moreover, which was plainly noticeable in certain winning quirks to her pronunciation. Two years before, she had given the wholesale merchant Klöterjahn her consent for life. She went with him to his home town, along the Baltic, and about ten months ago, under the most unusually difficult and dangerous circumstances, she had presented him with a child, a marvellously vigorous and well set-up son and heir. But since those dreadful days she had never regained her strength, if it could be said that she ever did have much strength. Exceptionally exhausted and exceptionally impoverished of all physical resistance, she had scarcely left her bed when she developed a cough which brought up a little blood. Oh, not much—an insignificant little speck of blood; but it would have been much preferable if it had not happened at all, while the disquieting thing was that after a short time the same slight but troublesome incident was repeated. Now, there were remedies for all this, and Dr Hinzpeter, the family physician, made use of them. A complete rest was prescribed, there was cracked ice to be swallowed, morphine was brought to bear against the tickling sensation which made her cough, and the heart was steadied as far as possible. But recovery refused to set in, and the young mother seemed to be consuming in a mild and silent glow while Anton Klöterjahn, Jr., a master-

piece of a baby, asserted and maintained his station in life with a frightful emphasis and lack of consideration. . . . As has been said before, it was the trachea, a word which, in Dr Hinzpeter's mouth, exercised an astonishingly consoling, reassuring, an almost hilarious effect on everyone. But although it was not the lungs, the doctor had eventually thought it highly advisable in accelerating her convalescence to try the influence of a milder climate and of a few months in some regular institute. The reputation of Einfried and its director had done the rest.

That was the way things stood; and Herr Klöterjahn in person told it to everyone who manifested the least interest. He spoke in a loud boisterous manner, and with the good humour of a man whose digestion is in as perfect order as his purse—with vastly explosive movements of his lips, in the broad, yet rapid fashion of people along the north coast. Many of his words were hurled out, so that each sound came like a discharge; and he would laugh about it as an excellent joke.

He was of medium height, broad, strong, and short-legged, and possessed a full red face with water-blue eyes shaded by light blond lashes, large nostrils and moist lips. He had English side-whiskers, wore English clothing, and was enchanted to find at Einfried an English family, father, mother, and three pretty children with their nurse, who were stopping here for the simple reason that they did not know where else to stop; he ate an English breakfast with them every morning. He was especially fond of his food and drink, displayed himself as a true connoisseur of both the cuisine and the wine cellar, and entertained the company most rousingly with accounts of the dinners which were given back home among his own circle, and with descriptions of certain choice dishes which were unknown here. At such times his eyes would squint with a kindly expression and his speech contained some palatal and nasal element, to an accompaniment of soft smacking noises deep in his gullet. As evidence that he was not fundamentally inimical to other earthly enjoyments, there was the evening when a patient at Einfried, an author by profession, came upon him in one of the corridors joking with a chambermaid in a somewhat inappropriate manner—a trifling bit of sport which caused the author concerned to show a most ridiculous expression of disgust.

As to Herr Klöterjahn's wife, it was more than plain that she was attached to him with all her heart. She followed his words

and motions with a smile; not with the complacent forbearance which most sufferers display towards the healthy, but with that lovable pleasure and sympathy which in rare instances good-natured invalids feel towards the confident manifestations of vitality by people who are perfectly at home in their skins.

Herr Klöterjahn did not stay long at Einfried. He had brought his wife here; but now that a week had passed, and he knew her to be comfortable and in good hands, he could stay no longer. Duties of equal importance, his thriving child, and his equally thriving business, called him back home. They compelled him to leave, with his wife entrusted to the best of care.

#### IV

Spinell was the name of the author who had been staying in Einfried for some weeks; Detlev Spinell was his name, and his exterior was remarkable.

Imagine a dark-haired man in his early thirties, quite tall, his hair already noticeably grey about the temples, and with a round, pale, somewhat puffy face which showed not the least trace of a beard. It was not shaved—one could tell; but it was soft and childlike, with a faint down showing here and there. This gave him a quite noteworthy appearance. His eyes had a soft expression about them, were somewhat staring, and of the colour of a deer. His nose was small, but a wee bit fleshy. In addition, Herr Spinell possessed the arched porous upper lip of a Roman, carious teeth, and feet of unusual length. One of the gentlemen with the uncontrollable legs, who was a bit of a cynic and a wit, had dubbed him behind his back "the decrepit baby." But that was nasty, and not at all to the point. He wore good fashionable clothes, went about in a long black coat and a vest with coloured dots.

He was unsociable, and found nothing in common with a single soul there. It was only once in a great while that an engaging, amiable, and overflowing mood came upon him; and this always happened when Herr Spinell was under some aesthetic urgency, when the sight of something beautiful or other, the composition of two colours, a nobly formed vase, or the mountains in sunset, surprised him into open admiration. "How beautiful!" he would say at such times, laying his head to one side and raising his shoulders while he opened his hands and twisted his nose and lips:

"God, just look, how beautiful!" And under the emotion of such a moment he was capable of throwing his arms blindly about the neck of the most distinguished person, whether man or woman.

There always lay on his table, visible to any one who entered his room, the book which he had written. It was a moderate-sized novel, provided with a thoroughly amazing cover and printed on a sort of filter paper for coffee. As to the type, each letter looked like a Gothic cathedral. Fräulein von Osterloh had read it in an idle hour, and found it "refined," which was her way of passing judgement of "godlessly boring." Everything happened in worldly *salons*, in luxurious boudoirs, full of grotesques, antique furniture, expensive porcelains, invaluable fabrics, and artistic ornaments of all sorts. The most loving emphasis was laid upon the description of such things; and through it you could always see Herr Spinell, with his nose twisted, saying, "How beautiful!" . . . Furthermore it could not help seeming queer that he had written no other books besides this one, since he still seemed to be writing with passion. He spent the major portion of the day in his room writing, and mailed an extraordinary number of letters, almost always one or two daily. Although it was very strange and amusing how seldom he received a letter in return. . . .

## V

Herr Spinell sat opposite Herr Klöterjahn's wife at the table. The first meal they all ate together, he appeared a bit late in the large dining-hall on the ground floor of the side wing, spoke in a weak voice to everyone in general, and took his place—whereupon Dr Leander introduced him to the new-comers without much ceremony. He bowed, and then began eating in a visibly embarrassed manner, manipulating his knife and fork somewhat affectedly in large, white, beautifully formed hands which came out of two narrow sleeves. Gradually he came to feel more at ease, and cast calm side-glances at Herr Klöterjahn and his wife. Also, in the course of the meal, Herr Klöterjahn offered a few questions and remarks about the situation and climate of Einfried; his wife dropped in a word here and there in her catching way, and Herr Spinell answered politely. His voice was soft and quite pleasant; but he had a somewhat impeded and sipping manner of talking, as though his teeth were in the way of his tongue.

After dinner, when everyone had gone into the drawing-room, and Dr Leander came to pay his compliments to the new guests in particular, Herr Klöterjahn's wife inquired about the person who had sat opposite them.

"What is the gentleman's name?" she asked. "Spinelli? I did not catch the name."

"Spinell, not Spinelli, Madam. No, he is not an Italian, but was merely born in Lemberg, so far as I know . . ."

"And did you say that he was a writer? Or just what?" Herr Klöterjahn asked. He had his hands deep in the pockets of his comfortable English trousers, leaned one ear to the doctor, and as is the case with a good many people, opened his mouth to listen.

"Indeed, I don't just know . . . he writes . . ." Dr Leander answered. "He has, I believe, published a book, a kind of novel, but I really don't know anything . . ."

This repeated "Don't know" indicated that Dr Leander didn't take much stock in the writer, and declined all responsibility for him.

"But that is certainly very interesting!" Herr Klöterjahn's wife put in. She had never before seen an author face to face.

"Oh, yes," Dr Leander answered accommodatingly. "He is supposed to have a certain amount of reputation . . ." Whereupon nothing more was said about the author.

But a little later, after the new guests had retired and Dr Leander was about to leave the drawing-room, Herr Spinell intercepted him and made inquiries on his part also.

"What is the name of these two?" he asked. "Of course, I didn't quite catch it."

"Klöterjahn," Dr Leander answered, and went on his way.

"What is the man's name?"

"Their name is Klöterjahn!" and Dr Leander was gone. He took no stock at all in this author.

## VI

Had we not reached the place where Herr Klöterjahn had gone back home? Indeed, he was again on the Baltic, with his business and his child, this inconsiderate and lively little creature which had cost his mother so many pains and a slight defect in the trachea. But as for her, the young wife, she stayed on in Einfried, and the

Magistratsrätin Spatz attached herself to her as an elder friend. But that did not keep Herr Klöterjahn's wife from mixing agreeably with the other patients. As for instance with Herr Spinell, who, to the astonishment of all—for up to now he had had nothing in common with a single soul there—had showed towards her from the very start an extraordinary amount of consideration and devotion, and with whom she enjoyed chatting in the free hours left her by a strenuous schedule.

He approached her with an immeasurable amount of caution and reverence, and would only speak to her in a carefully suppressed voice, so that the Rätin Spatz, who had trouble with her ears, could scarcely understand a word he said. He would tiptoe with his large feet up to the chair where Herr Klöterjahn's wife was leaning back frail and smiling. Then he would stop about two steps off, keep one leg behind the other, bend the upper part of his body, and talk in his impeded, somewhat sipping manner. He was quite urgent, but ready at any moment to retreat and disappear in haste as soon as the least sign of weariness or satiety might be noticeable on her face. But he did not weary her. She would press him to be seated near the Rätin and herself; then she would ask him some question or other, and listen to him smiling and engrossed. For quite frequently he would drop into a delightful and unusual vein, such as she had never met with before.

"Just why are you at Einfried?" she asked. "What sort of cure are you taking, Herr Spinell?"

"Cure? . . . I take a bit of the electric treatment. But not to speak of. I will tell you frankly why I am here. . . . On account of the period."

"Ah!" said Herr Klöterjahn's wife, supporting her chin in her hand and turning towards him with the exaggerated eagerness one puts on for children who are about to tell something.

"Oh, yes. Einfried is entirely Empire; it used to be a castle, a summer home, I am told. This side wing is a recent annex, but the main building is old and genuine. Now there are times when I simply can't live without Empire, when it is inevitably necessary to my well-being. It is plain that you must feel one way when among furniture which is soft and comfortable even to the extent of the lascivious, and feel another way among such tables, chairs, and drapes as these, with their marked straight lines. This brightness and strength, this cold crass simplicity and its reserve of



vigour, lends me bearing and dignity if you will; it produces an inner purging and renovation, and without a doubt it is uplifting. . . ."

"Yes, that is remarkable," she said. "And I can understand you, with a little effort."

Then he answered that it was not worth the effort, so that they both laughed together. The Rätin Spatz laughed too, and found it remarkable; but she didn't claim to understand him.

The drawing-room was large and attractive. The high white folding doors of the billiard-room stood wide open; here the gentlemen with the uncontrollable legs and several others were amusing themselves. To the other side, a glass door afforded a prospect of the broad terrace and garden. In one corner there was a piano. There was also a card table at hand, covered with green felt. Here and there a woman was reading or doing fancy-work. The heating was provided by an iron stove, although it was pleasant to sit and talk in front of the unused fire-place, with its imitation coal and flames made of painted paper. "You are an early riser, Herr Spinell," said Herr Klöterjahn's wife. "Two or three times I have happened to see you leaving the house around half past seven in the morning."

"An early riser? But with reservations, to be sure. The fact is that I get up early because I am really a sleepy-head."

"But you must explain that, Herr Spinell!" The Rätin Spatz also wanted to have it explained.

"Well . . . if you are an early riser, it doesn't seem necessary to me that you should get up that early. But our conscience . . . it is an awful problem, this conscience! I and those of my ilk spend all their time in a struggle with their own lives, and they are kept more than busy trying to deceive life here and there and to procure for it a sly little bit of self-complacency. We are useless creatures, I and those of my ilk, and with the exception of a good hour now and then we are burdened to death with the knowledge of our uselessness. We detest the useful, we know that it is common and unlovely, and we defend this truth the way one defends only a truth which is inevitably necessary to him. And yet we are so gnawed at by a bad conscience that there isn't a healthy spot left on us. Add to this the fact that the very nature of our inner existence, our attitude towards life, our method of work, has a horribly unwholesome, undermining, and irritable effect on us, which makes the case

that much the worse. But there are slight palliatives, without which it would all be unbearable. A certain selectness and hygienic rigour in the manner of living, for instance, is needed with many of us. To rise early, uncannily early, a cold bath and a walk through the snow . . . perhaps that will make us contented with ourselves for a whole hour. Believe me, if I did as I wanted, I should lie in bed until afternoon. So you see, my early rising is pure hypocrisy."

"Why no, Herr Spinell! I should call it self-mastery. . . . Shouldn't you, Frau Rätin?" And sure enough, the Rätin Spatz also called it self-mastery.

"Hypocrisy or self-mastery! It is a choice between one word and the other. But I happen to be so broodingly honest that I . . ."

"That is just it: you brood too much."

"Yes, I brood too much."

The good weather continued. The hills, the house and park, the entire locality, lay out in a flat pure white with blinding brilliance and bluish shadows. There was no wind, and the air was only moderately chilly. A delicate blue sky curved spotless above the entire scene, with myriads of tiny flaming torches, a dance of glistening crystals. At this time Herr Klöterjahn's wife was doing reasonably well. She had no fever, her cough was almost entirely gone, and she ate without forcing herself to it. According to her instructions, she would often sit out for hours at a time on the sunny terrace. She would sit in the snow, all bundled up in covers and furs, and breathe in unquestioningly the pure iron air, which was to improve her trachea. Then at times she would notice Herr Spinell going about the park. He would be just as warmly clad, and in fur shoes which gave his feet a fantastic size. He walked through the snow with a tentative step and a certain careful, stiffly graceful position to his arms, and when he reached the terrace, would greet her politely and climb the steps below her to begin a conversation.

"To-day, on my morning walk, I saw a beautiful woman . . . God, she was beautiful!" And he laid his head to one side, and opened his hands.

"Indeed, Herr Spinell? But you must describe her to me!"

"No, that is impossible. For I should give you an unjust picture of her. I caught the woman in passing, with just half a glance; I

didn't really see her. But the effaced shadow of her that I received, was enough to start me going and to let me carry away a picture that is beautiful . . . God, it is beautiful!"

She laughed. "Is that your way of observing beautiful women, Herr Spinell?"

"Yes, and it is a better way, than if I stared like some crude reality-monger into their faces and carried away the impression of a miserable collection of facts . . ."

"Reality-monger . . . That is a queer word! A genuine author's word, Herr Spinell! But it appeals to me, if I may say so. There is so much in it which I understand somewhat, something free and independent which is a challenge to our servitude to the actual . . . although it is nevertheless the most respectable thing imaginable, the very soul of respectability. . . . And then, I understand that there is something beyond the tangible, something more tender . . ."

"I know of only one face," he began suddenly, with an unusually happy note in his voice, raising his clenched hands to his shoulders and letting an exalted smile expose his large teeth; "I know of only one face where it would be a crime for me to think of correcting the noble reality with imagination . . . one face which I should be content to gaze at, to dwell upon, not minutes, not hours, but my entire life . . . to lose myself in it, and be made to forget everything of this earth . . ."

"Yes, yes, Herr Spinell! The only thing is that Fräulein von Osterloh has somewhat disagreeable ears."

He said nothing, bowing deeply. As he stood erect again, his eyes rested with an expression of embarrassment and anguish on the peculiar little vein which branched pale blue and sickly across the clarity of her almost transparent forehead.

## VII

Really, a quite remarkable sort! Herr Klöterjahn's wife would think about him now and then, since she had a good deal of time for thinking. Whether it was that the change of air was beginning to lose its effect, or that some actually harmful influence was asserting itself, the condition of her trachea could certainly have been better; she became weak, tired, without much appetite, and occasionally had a fever. Dr Leander was most emphatic in insist-

ing that she remain quiet, take plenty of rest, and be very careful of herself. So that when she did not have to be lying down, she would sit quietly near the Rätin Spatz, with some needle-work forgotten in her lap, and thinking of something or other.

Yes, he had set her to thinking . . . this strange Herr Spinell. But the remarkable thing was that she didn't think so much of him as of herself. Somehow or other, he had created in her an unusual curiosity, an interest she had never felt before, in her own person.

One day, in the course of a conversation, he had said, "No, they are puzzling things, women are. As old as the question is, you can't help considering it in astonishment. Some wonderful creature, a nymph, a vision, a being out of some fairy dream. And what does she do? Goes off and surrenders herself to some champion at a country fair, or some butcher's boy. She comes along on his arm, perhaps even leans her head against his shoulder, and looks about her with a sly smile, as if to say, 'Now then, you can go break your hearts about it!' And we do go and break our hearts."

While he was saying this, Herr Klöterjahn's wife had been very occupied.

Another day, to the great astonishment of the Rätin Spatz, the following dialogue took place between them:

"I wonder if I might dare to ask you—although it is very impertinent—what your name is, your true name?"

"Why, my name is Klöterjahn, Herr Spinell!"

"Hm. I knew that. Or rather, I challenge it. For, of course, I mean your real name, your maiden name. You will be just enough to grant me, I hope, that any one who would address you as 'Frau Klöterjahn' would deserved to be thrashed."

She laughed so heartily that the tiny blue vein over her eyebrow stood out with painful clarity, and gave her sweet, tender face an expression of effort and fatigue which was deeply disquieting.

"No! Surely not, Herr Spinell. To be thrashed? Does 'Klöterjahn' seem so awful to you?"

"Yes, I have hated this name from the bottom of my heart from the moment I first heard it. It is farcical, and frightfully homely; and it would be cruel and abject if one were to carry the accepted usage so far as to apply your husband's name to you."

"Well, and 'Eckhof'? Is 'Eckhof' better? My father's name is 'Eckhof.'"

"Ah, just see! 'Eckhof' is something quite different. 'Eckhof'

is even the name of a great actor. 'Eckhof' is proper. . . . You mention only your father. Your mother, then, could she . . . ."

"Yes, my mother died when I was still quite young."

"Ah. But tell me more about yourself, may I ask? But not if it tires you. If it tires you, you must rest, and I will go on telling you about Paris. But you could speak softly, yes, even if you whisper . . . that would only make everything the lovelier. . . . You were born in Bremen?" He put this question almost inaudibly, with an expression of worship and significance, as though there were no other city in the world like Bremen; as though Bremen were a city full of unmentionable adventures and speechless beauties, and to be born there gave one a vague majesty.

"Yes, just think!" she said involuntarily. "I come from Bremen."

"I was there once," he remarked thoughtfully.

"Great heavens, you were *there*, too! Herr Spinell, I believe you have seen everything from Tunis to Spitzbergen!"

"Yes, I was there once," he repeated. "A few short hours in the evening. I remember an old, narrow street, with a strange moon lying straight above the roofs of the houses. Then I was in a Rathskeller that smelt of wine and must. It is an insistent memory . . . ."

"Indeed? Just where could that have been? . . . Yes, I was born in just such a one of those dark, gabled houses . . . in the home of one of the old merchant families, with its reverberating hall and white lacquered portico."

"Then your father is a merchant?" he asked a bit falteringly.

"Yes. But besides that, and first of all, he is an artist."

"Ah! Ah! And to what extent?"

"He plays the violin. But that does not mean much. It is the way he plays it, Herr Spinell, that is important! I have never been able to hear certain notes without feeling the tears burn marvellously in my eyes . . . it is something that I experience in no other way. But you do not believe . . . ."

"I *do* believe! Ah, as if I could doubt! But tell me: your family is quite old? Many generations have already lived, worked, and died in that dark, gabled house?"

"Yes. But why do you ask that?"

"Because it often happens that a race with dry, practical bourgeois traditions finds itself again towards the end of its days in art."

"Is that the case? . . . Yes, as to my father, he is certainly more of an artist than many a man who calls himself an artist and lives on his reputation as an artist. I just play the piano a bit. Now I am not permitted to play, but then, at home, I used to play. My father and I . . . we played together. Yes, all those years are dear to me. Especially the garden, our garden, to the rear of the house. It was wretchedly grown up in weeds, and surrounded by mossy, crumbling walls; but that was what gave it its charm. There was a spring in the middle, with a thick wreath of irises about it. In the summer I used to spend long hours there with my girl friends. We all sat around the spring on little camp-stools . . ."

"How beautiful!" Herr Spinell said, raising his shoulders. "Would you sit there and sing?"

"No, we sewed."

"Always . . . always that . . ."

"Yes, we sewed and chatted, my six girl friends and I . . ."

"How beautiful! God, just listen, how beautiful!" exclaimed Herr Spinell, and his face was distorted with his enthusiasm.

"What do you find so especially beautiful in *that*, Herr Spinell?"

"Only this: that there were six beside you, that you were not included in this number, but stood out from the rest like a queen. You were distinguished from your six friends. A little golden crown, quite faint, but significant, shone in your hair . . ."

"No, nonsense, no sort of crown . . ."

"Still, it was shining secretly. I should have seen it, should have seen it plainly in your hair, if I had been hidden in the bushes at one of those times . . ."

"God only knows what you might have seen. But you weren't hidden there, although one day it was my present husband who stepped out of the bushes accompanied by my father. I am afraid they had overheard a good deal too much of our chatter . . ."

"Then that was the place you first met your husband?"

"Yes, I met him there for the first time!" she said loudly and cheerfully; and as she smiled, the tiny, pale-blue vein stood out, strained and peculiar. "He had come to see my father on business, you see. The next day he was invited to dinner, and three days later he asked to marry me."

"Indeed! And it all happened with such extraordinary swiftness?"

"Yes . . . Or rather, from then on things went a little slower.



For you must know that my father was not entirely willing at first, and conditioned quite a long delay. In the first place, he wanted to keep me with him, and he had still other reasons. But . . ."

"But?"

"But I *wanted* it to happen," she said with a smile, and again the little light-blue vein gave her whole face a distressed and sickly appearance.

"Ah, you wanted it to happen."

"Yes, and I showed a decently steady determination, as you see . . ."

"As I see. Yes."

". . . so that my father finally had to give in."

"And then you left him and his violin, left the old house, the luxuriant garden, the spring and your six girl friends, and went your way with Herr Klöterjahn."

"And went my way . . . You have a strange manner of expressing yourself, Herr Spinell! Almost biblical! Yes, I left the house, since that is Nature's arrangement."

"Yes, that is Nature's arrangement."

"And then, it was a matter of my future happiness."

"Of course. And it came, this happiness . . ."

"It came in the hour, Herr Spinell, when they first brought me little Anton, our little Anton, and when he wailed so powerfully with his sturdy little lungs . . . for he is so strong and healthy . . ."

"I have heard you speak several times of the health of your little Anton. He must be unusually healthy?"

"He certainly is. And he looks so comically like my husband!"

"Ah! . . . Yes, so it all happened that way. And now you are no longer called Eckhof, but something else, and you have a sturdy little Anton, and you are ailing somewhat in the trachea."

"Yes. . . . And you are an out and out enigmatical man, Herr Spinell, I can assure you . . ."

"Yes, heavens knows you are that!" said the Rätin Spatz, who was still at hand.

Herr Klöterjahn's wife often occupied herself deeply with this conversation. As non-committal as it had been, still it had something concealed at bottom which nourished her preoccupations with herself. Was *this* the harmful influence which was affecting her? Her weakness increased, and often fever set in—a quiet flame

which always left her in a mood of extravagance, thoughtful and contented, and with a vague sense of injury. When she was not forced to remain in bed, Herr Spinell would step across to her with extreme caution on the tips of his large feet, and remain standing about two steps distant, one leg placed behind the other, and the upper part of his body bent slightly forward. He would speak to her in a voice softened with worship, as if his sheer devotion would pick her up tenderly and lay her on a bed of clouds, where no harsh sound, no earthly irritation, could ever reach her. At such times she would remember the way Herr Klöterjahn had of saying, "Slowly, Gabriele, *take care*, my angel, and keep your mouth closed!"—he said it as though he were slapping you on the shoulder with crude good humour. But she would dismiss this recollection hastily, and lie back purged and weak in the bed of clouds Herr Spinell was so kind as to prepare for her.

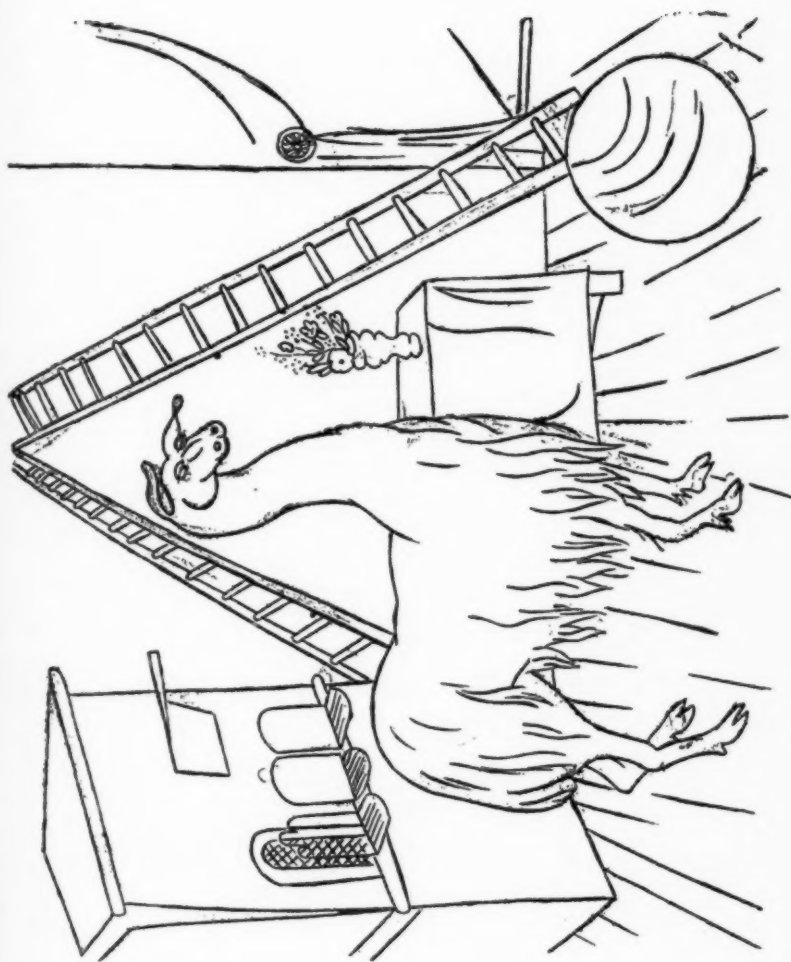
One day she went back abruptly to the conversation they had had about her parents and her girlhood.

"And it is really true, Herr Spinell," she said, "that you could have seen the crown?"

And although this talk had occurred fourteen days ago, he knew immediately what she meant, and he assured her with emotion that back there at the spring, as she was sitting there with her six girl friends, he would have seen the little crown glittering—would have seen it glittering in her hair.

A few days later one of the patients asked her out of politeness how her little Anton was doing back home. She sent a swift glance towards Herr Spinell, who was standing near her, and then answered somewhat peevishly, "How is he? Both he and my husband are doing very well, thank you."

*To be concluded*



THE LLAMA. BY EMANUEL FAY





THE TRAM. BY EMANUEL FAY

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## THE POETRY OF DROUTH

BY EDMUND WILSON, JR.

MR T. S. ELIOT'S first meagre volume of twenty-four poems was dropped into the waters of contemporary verse without stirring more than a few ripples. But when two or three years had passed, it was found to stain the whole sea. Or, to change the metaphor a little, it became evident that Mr Eliot had fished a murex up. His productions, which had originally been received as a sort of glorified *vers de société*, turned out to be unforgettable poems, which everyone was trying to rewrite. There might not be very much of him, but what there was had come somehow to seem precious and now the publication of his long poem, *The Waste Land*, confirms the opinion which we had begun gradually to cherish, that Mr Eliot, with all his limitations, is one of our only authentic poets. For this new poem—which presents itself as so far his most considerable claim to eminence—not only recapitulates all his earlier and already familiar motifs, but it sounds for the first time in all their intensity, untempered by irony or disguise, the hunger for beauty and the anguish at living which lie at the bottom of all his work.

Perhaps the best point of departure for a discussion of *The Waste Land* is an explanation of its title. Mr Eliot asserts that he derived this title, as well as the plan of the poem "and much of the incidental symbolism," from a book by Miss Jessie L. Weston called *From Ritual to Romance*. *The Waste Land*, it appears, is one of the many mysterious elements which have made of the Holy Grail legend a perennial puzzle of folk-lore; it is a desolate and sterile country, ruled over by an impotent king, in which not only have the crops ceased to grow and the animals to reproduce their kind, but the very human inhabitants have become unable to bear children. The renewal of the *Waste Land* and the healing of the "Fisher King's" wound depend somehow upon the success of the Knight who has come to find the Holy Grail.

Miss Weston, who has spent her whole life in the study of the Arthurian legends, has at last propounded a new solution for the

problems presented by this strange tale. Stimulated by Frazer's *Golden Bough*—of which this extraordinarily interesting book is a sort of offshoot—she has attempted to explain the Fisher King as a primitive vegetable god—one of those creatures who, like Attis and Adonis, is identified with Nature herself and in the temporary loss of whose virility the drouth or inclemency of the season is symbolized; and whose mock burial is a sort of earnest of his coming to life again. Such a cult, Miss Weston contends, became attached to the popular Persian religion of Mithraism and was brought north to Gaul and Britain by the Roman legionaries. When Christianity finally prevailed, Attis was driven underground and survived only as a secret cult, like the Venus of the Venusberg. The Grail legend, according to Miss Weston, had its origin in such a cult; the Lance and Grail are the sexual symbols appropriate to a fertility rite and the eerie adventure of the Chapel Perilous is the description of an initiation.

Now Mr Eliot uses the *Waste Land* as the concrete image of a spiritual drouth. His poem takes place half in the real world—the world of contemporary London, and half in a haunted wilderness—the *Waste Land* of the mediaeval legend; but the *Waste Land* is only the hero's arid soul and the intolerable world about him. The water which he longs for in the twilit desert is to quench the thirst which torments him in the London dusk. —And he exists not only upon these two planes, but as if throughout the whole of human history. Miss Weston's interpretation of the Grail legend lent itself with peculiar aptness to Mr Eliot's extraordinarily complex mind (which always finds itself looking out upon the present with the prouder eyes of the past and which loves to make its oracles as deep as the experience of the race itself by piling up stratum upon stratum of reference, as the Italian painters used to paint over one another); because she took pains to trace the Buried God not only to Attis and Adonis, but further back to the recently revealed Tammuz of the Sumerian-Babylonian civilization and to the god invited to loosen the waters in the abysmally ancient Vedic Hymns. So Mr Eliot hears in his own parched cry the voices of all the thirsty men of the past—of the author of *Ecclesiastes* in majestic bitterness at life's futility, of the Children of Israel weeping for Zion by the unrefreshing rivers of Babylon, of the disciples after the Crucifixion meeting the phantom of Christ on their journey; of Buddha's renunciation of life and Dante's astonishment at the weary hordes of

Hell, and of the sinister dirge with which Webster blessed the "friendless bodies of unburied men." In the centre of his poem he places the weary figure of the blind immortal prophet Tiresias, who, having been woman as well as man, has exhausted all human experience and, having "sat by Thebes below the wall and walked among the lowest of the dead," knows exactly what will happen in the London flat between the typist and the house-agent's clerk; and at its beginning the almost identical figure of the Cumaean Sibyl mentioned in Petronius, who—gifted also with extreme longevity and preserved as a sort of living mummy—when asked by little boys what she wanted, replied only "I want to die." Not only is life sterile and futile, but men have tasted its sterility and futility a thousand times before. T. S. Eliot, walking the desert of London, feels profoundly that the desert has always been there. Like Tiresias, he has sat below the wall of Thebes; like Buddha, he has seen the world as an arid conflagration; like the Sibyl, he has known everything and known everything vain.

Yet something else, too, reaches him from the past: as he wanders among the vulgarities which surround him, his soul is haunted by heroic strains of an unfading music. Sometimes it turns suddenly and shockingly into the jazz of the music-halls, sometimes it breaks in the middle of a bar and leaves its hearer with dry ears again, but still it sounds like the divine rumour of some high destiny from which he has fallen, like indestructible pride in the citizenship of some world which he never can reach. In a London boudoir, where the air is stifling with a dust of futility, he hears, as he approaches his hostess, an echo of Anthony and Cleopatra and of Aeneas coming to the house of Dido—and a painted panel above the mantel gives his mind a moment's swift release by reminding him of Milton's Paradise and of the nightingale that sang there. —Yet though it is most often things from books which refresh him, he has also a slight spring of memory. He remembers someone who came to him with wet hair and with hyacinths in her arms, and before her he was stricken senseless and dumb—"looking into the heart of light, the silence." There were rain and flowers growing then. Nothing ever grows during the action of the poem and no rain ever falls. The thunder of the final vision is "dry sterile thunder without rain." But as Gerontion in his dry rented house thinks wistfully of the young men who fought in the rain, as Prufrock longs to ride green waves and linger in the chambers of the sea, as Mr Apollinax is

imagined drawing strength from the deep sea-caves of coral islands, so in this new poem Mr Eliot identifies water with all freedom and illumination of the soul. He drinks the rain that once fell on his youth as—to use an analogy in Mr Eliot's own manner—Dante drank at the river of Eunoë that the old joys he had known might be remembered. But—to note also the tragic discrepancy, as Mr Eliot always does—the draught, so far from renewing his soul and leaving him pure to rise to the stars, is only a drop absorbed in the desert; to think of it is to register its death. The memory is the dead god whom—as Hyacinth—he buries at the beginning of the poem and which—unlike his ancient prototype—is never to come to life again. Hereafter, fertility will fail; we shall see women deliberately making themselves sterile; we shall find that love has lost its life-giving power and can bring nothing but an asceticism of disgust. He is travelling in a country cracked by drouth in which he can only dream feverishly of drowning or of hearing the song of the hermit-thrush which has at least the music of water. The only reappearance of the god is as a phantom which walks beside him, the delirious hallucination of a man who is dying of thirst. In the end the dry-rotted world is crumbling about him—his own soul is falling apart. There is nothing left to prop it up but some dry stoic Sanskrit maxims and the broken sighs from the past, of singers exiled or oppressed. Like de Nerval, he is disinherited; like the poet of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, he is dumb; like Arnaut Daniel in Purgatory, he begs the world to raise a prayer for his torment, as he disappears in the fire.

It will be seen from this brief description that the poem is complicated; and it is actually even more complicated than I have made it appear. It is sure to be objected that Mr Eliot has written a puzzle rather than a poem and that his work can possess no higher interest than a full-rigged ship built in a bottle. It will be said that he depends too much upon books and borrows too much from other men and that there can be no room for original quality in a poem of little more than four hundred lines which contains allusions to, parodies of, or quotations from, the Vedic Hymns, Buddha, the Psalms, Ezekiel, Ecclesiastes, Luke, Sappho, Virgil, Ovid, Petronius, the *Pervigilium Veneris*, St Augustine, Dante, the Grail Legends, early English poetry, Kyd, Spenser, Shakespeare, John Day, Webster, Middleton, Milton, Goldsmith, Gérard de Nerval, Froude, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Swinburne, Wagner, The

Golden Bough, Miss Weston's book, various popular ballads, and the author's own earlier poems. It has already been charged against Mr Eliot that he does not feel enough to be a poet and that the emotions of longing and disgust which he does have belong essentially to a delayed adolescence. It has already been suggested that his distaste for the celebrated Sweeney shows a superficial mind and that if he only looked more closely into poor Sweeney he would find Eugene O'Neill's Hairy Ape; and I suppose it will be felt in connexion with this new poem that if his vulgar London girls had only been studied by Sherwood Anderson they would have presented a very different appearance. At bottom, it is sure to be said, Mr Eliot is timid and prosaic like Mr Prufrock; he has no capacity for life, and nothing which happens to Mr Prufrock can be important.

Well: all these objections are founded on realities, but they are outweighed by one major fact—the fact that Mr Eliot is a poet. It is true his poems seem the products of a constricted emotional experience and that he appears to have drawn rather heavily on books for the heat he could not derive from life. There is a certain grudging margin, to be sure, about all that Mr Eliot writes—as if he were compensating himself for his limitations by a peevish assumption of superiority. But it is the very acuteness of his suffering from this starvation which gives such poignancy to his art. And, as I say, Mr Eliot is a poet—that is, he feels intensely and with distinction and speaks naturally in beautiful verse—so that, no matter within what walls he lives, he belongs to the divine company. His verse is sometimes much too scrappy—he does not dwell long enough upon one idea to give it its proportionate value before passing on to the next—but these drops, though they be wrung from flint, are none the less authentic crystals. They are broken and sometimes infinitely tiny, but they are worth all the rhinestones on the market. I doubt whether there is a single other poem of equal length by a contemporary American which displays so high and so varied a mastery of English verse. The poem is—in spite of its lack of structural unity—simply one triumph after another—from the white April light of the opening and the sweet wistfulness of the nightingale passage—one of the only successful pieces of contemporary blank verse—to the shabby sadness of the Thames Maidens, the cruel irony of Tiresias' vision, and the dry grim stony style of the descriptions of the Waste Land itself.

That is why Mr Eliot's trivialities are more valuable than other



people's epics—why Mr Eliot's detestation of Sweeney is more precious than Mr Sandburg's sympathy for him, and Mr Prufrock's tea-table tragedy more important than all the passions of the New Adam—sincere and carefully expressed as these latter emotions indubitably are. That is also why, for all its complicated correspondences and its recondite references and quotations, *The Waste Land* is intelligible at first reading. It is not necessary to know anything about the Grail Legend or any but the most obvious of Mr Eliot's allusions to feel the force of the intense emotion which the poem is intended to convey—as one cannot do, for example, with the extremely ill-focussed *Eight Cantos* of his imitator Mr Ezra Pound, who presents only a bewildering mosaic with no central emotion to provide a key. In Eliot the very images and the sound of the words—even when we do not know precisely why he has chosen them—are charged with a strange poignancy which seems to bring us into the heart of the singer. And sometimes we feel that he is speaking not only for a personal distress, but for the starvation of a whole civilization—for people grinding at barren office-routine in the cells of gigantic cities, drying up their souls in eternal toil whose products never bring them profit, where their pleasures are so vulgar and so feeble that they are almost sadder than their pains. It is our whole world of strained nerves and shattered institutions, in which “some infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing” is somehow being done to death—in which the maiden Philomel “by the barbarous king so rudely forced” can no longer even fill the desert “with inviolable voice.” It is the world in which the pursuit of grace and beauty is something which is felt to be obsolete—the reflections which reach us from the past cannot illumine so dingy a scene; that heroic prelude has ironic echoes among the streets and the drawing-rooms where we live. Yet the race of the poets—though grown rarer—is not yet quite dead: there is at least one who, as Mr Pound says, has brought a new personal rhythm into the language and who has lent even to the words of his great predecessors a new music and a new meaning.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Waste Land*. By T. S. Eliot. 12mo. 64 pages. Boni and Liveright.



## WHEN FRESH, IT WAS SWEET

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Balieff's actors from *The Bat*  
in Moscow seem as if from the  
centre of the onion—the vision  
predominates. Removed from the intimate  
it is all intimate, closely observed  
to be deftly translated to the stage—

The swiftmess, fulness, delicacy  
of their compositions dance with  
the imaginations of peasants and  
musicians, philosophers, and  
gipsies—The keen eyes of humour  
look from tall women's faces  
gently; the *ensemble* is felt  
above the detail; the music goes  
free of the fact; the satire puts  
a varicoloured bridle on the donkey—  
the old and the young  
engage in the same pastimes—

Pantomime and gesture  
woman or man—a power suffuses everything  
gathering it altogether  
uniting without brushing even the bloom—  
The free air  
welcomes them to itself, the footlights  
obey as if it were some lost master—  
The Americans of the audience  
crumble, sweetness escapes their lips,  
their straining comedians feel  
a lightness that bids them play—  
They are relieved of their lot  
Jolson is entranced

## WHEN FRESH, IT WAS SWEET

To what is this that everybody  
comes with gifts as of old they used  
to bring gifts to shrines or altars?

Russian skill of dancing? No.  
Dadaistic scenery? No. Excellent  
as these things are. The whole  
reveals these things.

The quaintness of Russian types,  
the depth, sweetness, gaiety, colour  
of the Russian character? No.

The symmetry, reserve, force, tallness  
of the woman? The diverse simpleness  
and open humour of the men?  
The sheer skill as singers, the  
ingenuity of the managers, the composers,  
the depth of tradition? No.

All these things existed before  
the performance. Is it Balieff?  
There are other Balieffs. All these things  
are essential—But it is not that  
which makes men ashamed and tender and  
wistful and submissive—ready to learn:

Katinka dances her polka  
on the contracted stage of composition  
Gaiety is formalized in her dress  
and her make-up. Youth is in  
the choice of the actress. Her father blinks  
to the music  
to show his joy in her dancing  
The mother with severe face of renunciation  
in a shawl—

It cannot be more than it is  
without in a peasant's cottage  
being mercenary to the landlord  
who kills the splendour of national character

by his demands for rent, the filth of  
stupidity which has no escape  
—blend to make impossible  
all that is not imagined by men who have  
lived yet unsated  
by life's endless profusion  
and colour  
and rhythms, who seeing the brevity  
of their transit through the spinning world  
have resort to—  
translation

Here life's exquisite diversity  
its tenderness  
ardour of spirits  
find that in which they may move—

All enters—Katinka dances  
The father blinks  
The mother severely stares  
—hey-la!  
we all laugh together—Life has us  
by the arm.

Katinka dies by bending  
her body down in a crouch about her knees  
there she stays panting from  
the exertion of dancing—

The parents relent in alarm

Katinka rebegins to dance—  
Finis

## IS THE REAL THE ACTUAL?

BY MARIANNE MOORE

THE preoccupation to-day is with the actual. The work therefore of Alfeo Faggi, exhibited last year and with important additions this year at the Bourgeois Gallery, is especially for the thinker, presenting as it does solidly and in variety, a complete contrast to the fifty-fathom deep materialism of the hour.

Spiritual imagination as is apparent, is especially potent in interpreting subjects which are spiritual, seeming to derive feeling from the subject rather than to have to bring feeling to it as in the theme which is palpable and easily comprehensible; therefore as could be expected, in the recent exhibition, the more purely philosophic and intellectual concepts—the Ka and the Dante—make the most powerful impression; and although one would not naturally classify the Robert Jones with the Dante, it is entirely congruous that the same mind that could reach the heights and depths of spirituality which would produce the Dante, could marginally produce that which is so highly aesthetic as the Jones; a thing so illusory in its effect of poetic distillation as the mask of Noguchi; a portrait so distinguished as that of Robert Frost; so pliant as the Eve with its early-in-the-morning atmosphere, recalling Spenser's swans:

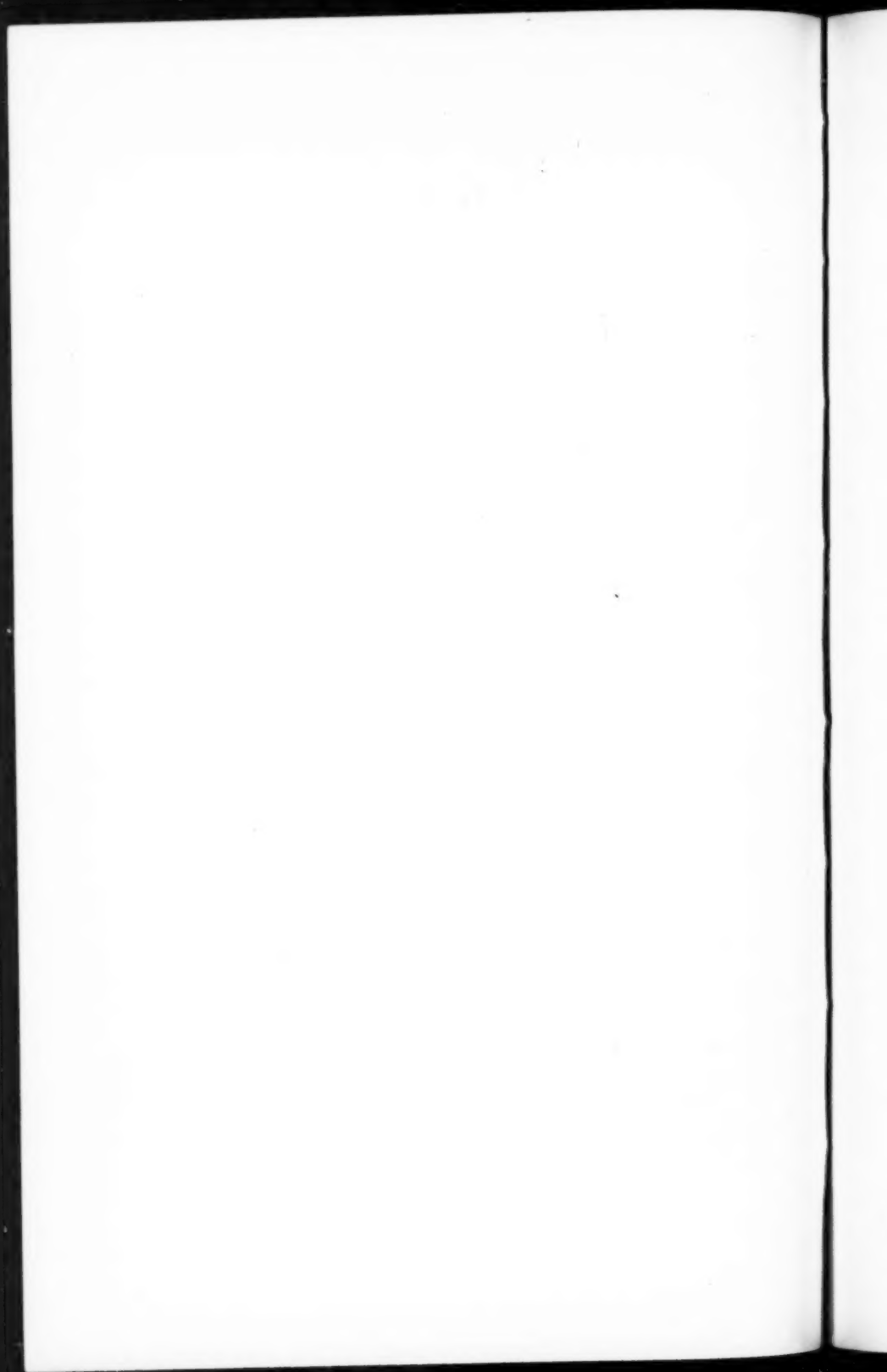
"even the gentle streame, the which them bare,  
Seem'd foule to them, and bade his billows spare  
To wet their silken feathers."

The astutely chosen medium in which each study is executed, bears out what one feels, in the sensitive development of the subject in hand—the smooth dark surface of the Tagore like a ripe olive, the bone-white, weathered aspect of the Frost, the misty waxlike bloom on the Eve as on bayberries or iris stalks, the tarnish and glint of fire of the Dante. However great the range of subject, there is a creative unity; complementary curves and repeated motive of lines



*Courtesy of the Bourgeois Galleries*

KA. BY ALFEO FAGGI







*Courtesy of the Bourgeois Galleries*

MOTHER AND CHILD. BY ALFEO FAGGI

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or angles in hands or drapery—which instantly mark the subjects as being one man's work; there is moreover as in the work of any disciplined mind, an absence of stentorian insistence on the work's right to attention—the scorn of self-extenuation as in the case of Dante, Socrates, and Christ. Remembering C. H. Herford's comment upon Sir Thomas Browne's contemporary, Alexander Ross, one hesitates to appraise work—even to praise it—the inspiration of which is spiritual. Herford says: "The formidable Alexander Ross in his *Medicus Medicatus*, drove his heavy bludgeon this way and that through the tenuous fabric of the *Religio* without damaging a whit its spiritual substance 'for it was as the air invulnerable.'" Corrupted by the conventions of the banal and the bizarre, under contract to compass every novelty, there are many critics or so-called artists qualified to judge of such work only in so far as they are able to discriminate between Hepplewhite and Sheraton. The most hasty, however, the most errant, will feel in Mr Faggi's *Ka* as in all his work, the controlled emotion, the mental poise which suggests the Absolute—a superiority to fetishism and triviality, a transcendence, an inscrutable dignity—a swordlike mastery in the lips, which suggests the martyr secure in having found the key to mystery, a reserve which recalls Dante as pictured by Croce, "absorbed and consumed by his secret, unwilling that vulgar and gossiping folk should cast their eyes upon it: 'and he smiling looked at them and said nothing.'" Face to face with such sincere expressions, one suspects that in the vulgarity and peremptoriness of one's passions, either in praise or blame, one may be as St Augustine says he was prior to his conversion, "like a dog snapping at flies." A reverence for mystery is not a vague, invertebrate thing. The realm of the spirit is the only realm in which experience is able to corroborate the fact that the real can be also the actual. Such work as Mr Faggi's is a refutation of the petulant patronage which for instance assigns Plato to adolescents—which remarks: "How Plato hated a fact!"

To grasp the nature of the phenomenon which Dante represents, is perhaps impossible to many of us since one cannot discern forces by which one is not oneself unconsciously animated. As Symons has remarked, "We find the greatest difficulty in believing that Socrates was sincere, that Dante was sincere." One feels that even

with a profound critical interest in Dante, Boccaccio could not, as Symons says, comprehend a nature more metaphysical than his own. However, those who have studied biographical conjecture and the historical certainties of Dante's life, will be grateful to Mr Faggi for his synthesis of what is the feeling or at least the apprehension of so many. In this robustly compact bronze like some colossal gold ingot stood erect, obviously intended to represent a man but not brutishly male, with the look of the athlete made lean, with the action in repose of the spiritual potentate, one sees the man as one has imagined him, the student of "philosophy, theology, astrology, arithmetic, and geometry, turning over many curious books, watching and sweating in his studies," with a view of the world founded as Croce says, on faith, judgement, and bound by a strong will, commanding like a wall of solid water, the incredulity of minds egotistical and as shallow as a fish-wafer—too idle to think. In the intellectuality, the distilled impersonal spiritual force of Mr Faggi's Dante, one recalls Giotto's superiority to interest in masculinity or femininity *per se*; the inadvertent muscularity and angelic grace of his male figures—the faces of his madonnas and female saints, like the faces of stalwart boys. In the shoulders compact like a bulldog's, in the nostrils built for expansion in action under physical stress sunk under long imposed restraint, the horizontal eyebrows, raised cheekbones of the ascetic, the iron skull, the substantial character of the face as of an iron crow, the mobile expression of the mouth—not incompatible with the gaiety of which Croce and other authorities are convinced—the cap like war, set from the face as if to indicate hope; the collar, round like an ecclesiastic's, the wakeful reserve of the lowered eyes—we have "the ardor, admiration and fury" of the politician, the distilled supersensory sentience of the seer—the man who was "the product of a nation of scholars and doctors who were artists." In the animating force of this bronze in its setting of physical power, is embodied the spiritual axiom that Dante has come to be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reproductions of Mr Faggi's work have appeared in *THE DIAL* for March, 1921 (Madonna, Yoné Noguchi, and Pietà) and in April, 1922 (Dante).



A HEAD. BY RUDOLF VON HUHN







A HEAD. BY RUDOLF VON HUHN



## MANY MARRIAGES

BY SHERWOOD ANDERSON

### II (*continued*)

At the office, during the day, there were no such periods of exhilaration. There only Natalie seemed quite in control of the situation. "She has stout legs and strong feet. She knows how to stand her ground," John Webster thought as he sat at his desk and looked across at her sitting at her desk.

She was not insensible to what was going on about her. Sometimes when he looked suddenly up at her and when she did not know he was looking he saw something that convinced him her hours alone were not now very happy. There was a tightening about the eyes. No doubt she had her own little hell to face.

Still she went about her work every day outwardly unperturbed. "That old Irish woman, with her temper, her drinking, and her love of loud picturesque profanity has managed to put her daughters through a course of sprouts," he decided. It was well Natalie was so level-headed. "The Lord knows she and I may need all of her level-headedness before we are through with our lives," he decided. There was something in women, a kind of power, few men understood. They could stand the gaff. Now Natalie did his work and her own too. When a letter came she answered it and when there was something to be decided she made the decision. Sometimes she looked across at him as though to say, "Your job, the clearing up you will still have to do in your own house, will be more difficult than anything I shall have to face. You let me attend to these minor details of our life now. To do that makes the time of waiting less difficult for me."

She did not say anything of the sort in words, being one not given to words, but there was always something in her eyes that made him understand what she wanted to say.

After that first love-making in the field they were not lovers again while they remained in the Wisconsin town although every evening they went to walk together. After dining at her mother's house

where she had to pass under the questioning eyes of her sister the school-teacher, also a silent woman, and to withstand a fiery outbreak from her mother who came to the door to shout questions after her down the street, Natalie came back along the railroad tracks to find John Webster waiting for her in the darkness by the office door. Then they walked boldly through the streets and went into the country and, when they had got upon a country road, went hand in hand, for the most part in silence.

And from day to day, in the office and in the Webster household the feeling of tenseness grew more and more pronounced.

In the house, when he had come in late at night and had crept up to his room, he had a sense of the fact that both his wife and daughter were lying awake, thinking of him, wondering about him, wondering what strange thing had happened to make him suddenly a new man. From what he had seen in their eyes in the day-time he knew that they had both become suddenly aware of him. Now he was no longer the mere bread-winner, the man who goes in and out of his house as a work horse goes in and out of a stable. Now, as he lay in his bed and behind the two walls of his room and the two closed doors, voices were awakening within them, little fearful voices. His mind had got into the habit of thinking of walls and doors. "Some night the walls will fall down and the two doors will open. I must be ready for the time when that happens," he thought.

His wife was one who, when she was excited, resentful, or angry, sank herself into an ocean of silence. Perhaps the whole town knew of his walking about in the evening with Natalie Swartz. Had news of it come to his wife she would not have spoken of the matter to her daughter. There would be just a dense kind of silence in the house and the daughter would know there was something the matter. There had been such times before. The daughter would have become frightened, perhaps it would be just at bottom the fear of change, that something was about to happen that would disturb the steady even passage of days.

One noon, during the second week after the love-making with Natalie, he walked towards the centre of town, intending to go into a restaurant and eat lunch, but instead walked straight ahead down the tracks for nearly a mile. Then, not knowing exactly what impulse had led him, he went back to the office. Natalie and all the

others except the youngest of the three women had gone out. Perhaps the air of the place had become so heavy with unexpressed thoughts and feelings that none of them wanted to stay there when they were not working. The day was bright and warm, a golden and red Wisconsin day of early October.

He walked into the inner office, stood a moment looking vaguely about and then came out again. The young woman sitting there arose. Was she going to say something to him about the affair with Natalie? He also stopped and stood looking at her. She was a small woman with a sweet womanly mouth, grey eyes, and with a kind of tiredness expressing itself in her whole being. What did she want? Did she want him to go ahead with the love-affair with Natalie, of which she no doubt knew, or did she want him to stop? "It would be dreadful if she should try to speak about it," he thought and then at once, for some unexplainable reason, knew she would not try that.

They stood for a moment looking into each other's eyes and the look was like a kind of love-making too. It was very strange and the moment would afterwards give him much to think about. In the future no doubt his life was to be filled with many thoughts. There was this woman he did not know at all, standing before him, and in their own way he and she were being lovers too. Had the thing not happened between himself and Natalie so recently, had he not still been filled with that, something of the sort might well have happened between him and this woman.

In reality the matter of the two people standing thus and looking at each other occupied but a moment. Then she sat down, a little confused, and he went quickly out.

There was a kind of joy in him now. "There is love abundant in the world. It may take many roads to expression. The woman in there is hungry for love and there is something fine and generous about her. She knows Natalie and I love and she has, in some obscure way I can't yet understand, given herself to that until it has become almost a physical experience with her too. There are a thousand things in life no one rightly understands. Love has as many branches as a tree."

He went up into a business street of the town and turned into a section with which he was not very familiar. He was passing a little store, near a Catholic church, such a store as is patronized by

devout Catholics and in which are sold figures of the Christ on the cross, the Christ lying at the foot of the cross with His bleeding wounds, the Virgin standing with arms crossed looking demurely down, blessed candles, candlesticks, and the like. For a moment he stood before the store window looking at the figures displayed and then went in and bought a small framed picture of the Virgin, a supply of yellow candles, and two glass candlesticks, made in the shape of crosses and with little gilded figures of the Christ on the cross upon them.

To tell the truth the figure of the Virgin looked not unlike Natalie. There was a kind of quiet strength in her. She stood, holding a lily in her right hand and the thumb and first finger of her left hand touched lightly a great heart pinned to her breast by a dagger. Across the heart was a wreath of five red roses.

John Webster stood for a moment looking into the Virgin's eyes and then bought the things and hurried out of the store. Then he took a street car and went to his own house. His wife and daughter were out and he went up into his own room and put the packages in a closet. When he came down stairs the servant Katherine was waiting for him. "May I get you something to eat again to-day?" she asked and smiled.

He did not stay to have lunch, but it was fine, being asked to stay. At any rate she had remembered the day when she had stood near him while he ate. He had liked being alone with her that day. Perhaps she had felt the same thing and had liked being with him.

He walked straight out of town and got into a country road and presently turned off the road into a small wood. For two hours he sat on a log looking at the trees now flaming with colour. The sun shone brightly and after a time the squirrels and birds became less conscious of his presence and the animal and bird life that had been stilled by his coming was renewed.

It was the afternoon after the night of his walking in the streets between the rows of houses the walls of which had been torn away by his fancy. "I shall tell Natalie of that to-night and I shall tell her also of what I intend to do at home there in my room. I shall tell her and she will say nothing. She is a strange one. When she does not understand she believes. There is something in her that accepts life as these trees do," he thought.



## III

A strange kind of nightly ceremony was begun in John Webster's corner room on the second floor of his house. When he had come into the house he went softly up stairs and into his own room. Then he took off all his clothes and hung them in a closet. When he was quite nude he got out the little picture of the Virgin and set it up on a kind of dresser that stood in a corner between the two windows. On the dresser he also placed the two candlesticks with the Christ on the cross on them and putting two of the yellow candles in them lighted the candles.

As he had undressed in the darkness he did not see the room or himself until he saw by the light of the candles. Then he began to walk back and forth, thinking such thoughts as came into his head.

"I have no doubt I am insane," he told himself, "but as long as I am, it might as well be a purposeful insanity. I haven't been liking this room or the clothes I wear. Now I have taken the clothes off and perhaps I can in some way purify the room a bit. As for my walking about in the streets and letting my fancy play over many people in their houses, that will be all right in its turn too, but at present my problem lies in this house. There have been many years of stupid living in the house and in this room. Now I shall keep up this ceremony; making myself nude and walking up and down here before the Virgin, until neither my wife nor my daughter can keep up her silence. They will break in here some night quite suddenly and then I will say what I have to say before I go away with Natalie."

"As for you, my Virgin, I dare say I shall not offend you," he said aloud, turning and bowing to the woman within her frame. She looked steadily at him as Natalie might have looked and he kept smiling at her. It seemed quite clear to him now what his course in life was to be. He reasoned it all out slowly. In a way he did not, at the time, need much sleep. Just letting go of himself, as he was doing, was a kind of resting.

In the meantime he walked naked and with bare feet up and down the room trying to plan out his future life. "I accept the notion that I am at present insane and only hope I shall remain so," he told himself. After all, it was quite apparent that the sane people about were not getting such joy out of life as himself. There was this mat-

ter of his having brought the Virgin into his own naked presence and having set her up under the candles. For one thing the candles spread a soft glowing light through the room. The clothes he habitually wore and that he had learned to dislike because they had been made not for himself, but for some impersonal being, in some clothing factory, were now hung away, out of sight in the closet. "The gods have been good to me. I am not very young any more, but for some reason I have not let my body get fat or gross," he thought going into the circle of candle light and looking long and earnestly at himself.

In the future and after the nights when his walking thus back and forth in the room had forced itself upon the attention of his wife and daughter until they were compelled to break in upon him, he would take Natalie with him and go away. He had provided himself with a little money, enough so that they could live for a few months. The rest would be left to his wife and daughter. After he and Natalie had got clear of the town they would go off somewhere, perhaps to the West. Then they would settle down somewhere and work for their living.

What he himself wanted, more than anything else, was to give way to the impulses within himself. "It must have been that, when I was a boy and my imagination played madly over all the life about me, I was intended to be something other than the dull clod I have been all these years. In Natalie's presence, as in the presence of a tree or a field, I can be myself. I dare say I shall have to be a little careful sometimes as I do not want to be declared insane and locked up somewhere, but Natalie will help me in that. In a way my letting go of myself will be an expression for both of us. In her own way she also has been locked within a prison. Walls have been erected about her too.

"It may just be, you see, that there is something of the poet in me and Natalie should have a poet for a lover.

"The truth is that I shall be at the job of in some way bringing grace and meaning into my life. It must be after all that it is for something of the sort life is intended.

"In reality it would not be such a bad thing if, in the few years of life I have left, I accomplished nothing of importance. When one comes right down to it accomplishment is not the vital thing in a life.

"As things are now, here in this town and in all the other towns

and cities I have ever been in, things are a good deal in a muddle. Everywhere lives are lived without purpose. Men and women either spend their lives going in and out of the doors of houses and factories or they own houses and factories and they live their lives and find themselves at last facing death and the end of life without having lived at all."

He kept smiling at himself and his own thoughts as he walked up and down the room and occasionally he stopped walking and made an elaborate bow to the Virgin. "I hope you are a true virgin," he said. "I brought you into this room and into the presence of my nude body because I thought you would be that. You see, being a virgin, you cannot have anything but pure thoughts."

#### IV.

Quite often, during the day-time, and after the time when the nightly ceremony in his room began, John Webster had moments of fright. "Suppose," he thought, "my wife and daughter should look through the keyhole into my room some night, and should decide to have me locked up instead of coming in there and giving me the chance I want to talk with them. As the matter stands I cannot carry out my plans unless I can get the two of them into the room without asking them to come."

He had a keen sense of the fact that what was to transpire in his room would be terrible for his wife. Perhaps she would not be able to stand it. A streak of cruelty had developed in him. In the day-time now he seldom went to his office and when he did stayed but a few minutes. Every day he took a long walk into the country, sat under the trees, wandered in woodland paths and in the evening walked in silence beside Natalie, also in the country. The days marched past in quiet fall splendour. There was a kind of sweet new responsibility in just being alive when one felt so alive.

One day he climbed a little hill from the top of which he could see, off across fields, the factory chimneys of his town. A soft haze lay over woodland and fields. The voices within him did not riot now, but chattered softly.

As for his daughter, the thing to be done was to startle her, if possible, into a realization of the fact of life. "I owe her that," he thought. "Even though the thing that must happen will be terribly hard for her mother it may bring life to Jane. In the end the dead

must surrender their places in life to the living. When long ago, I went to bed of that woman, who is my Jane's mother, I took a certain responsibility upon myself. The going to bed of her may not have been the most lovely thing in the world, as it turned out, but it is a thing that was done and the result is this child, who is now no longer a child, but who has become in her physical life a woman. Having helped to give her this physical life I have now to try at least to give her this other, this inner life also."

He looked down across the fields towards the town. When the job he had yet to do was done he would go away and spend the rest of his life moving about among people, looking at people, thinking of them and their lives. Perhaps he would become a writer. That would be as it turned out.

He got up from his seat on the grass at the top of the hill and went down along a road that would lead back to town and to his evening's walk with Natalie. Evening would be coming on soon now. "I'll never preach at any one, anyhow. If by chance I do ever become a writer I'll only try to tell people what I have seen and heard in life and besides that I'll spend my time walking up and down and looking and listening," he thought.

### BOOK THREE

And on that very night, after he had been seated on the hill thinking of his life and what he would do with what remained of it and after he had gone for the customary evening walk with Natalie, the doors of his room did open and his wife and daughter came in.

It was about half past eleven o'clock and for an hour he had been walking softly up and down before the picture of the Virgin. The candles were lighted. His feet made a soft cat-like sound on the floor. There was something strange and startling about hearing the sound in the quiet house.

The door leading to his wife's room opened and she stood looking at him. Her tall form filled the door-way and her hands clutched at the sides of the door. She was very pale and her eyes were fixed and staring. "John," she said hoarsely and then repeated the word. She seemed to want to say more, but to be unable to speak. There was a sharp sense of ineffectual struggle.

It was certain she was not very handsome as she stood there. "Life pays people out. Turn your back on life and it gets even with

you. When people do not live they die and when they are dead they look dead," he thought. He smiled at her and then turned his head away and stood listening.

It came—the sound for which he was listening. There was a stir in his daughter's room. He had counted so much on things turning out as he wished and had even had a premonition it would happen on this particular night. What had happened he thought he understood. For more than a week now there had been this storm raging over the ocean of silence that was his wife. There had been just such another prolonged and resentful silence after their first attempt at love-making and after he had said certain sharp hurtful things to her. That had gradually worn itself out, but this new thing was something different. It could not wear itself out in that way. The thing had happened for which he had prayed. She had been compelled to meet him here, in the place he had prepared.

And now his daughter, who had also been lying awake night after night, and hearing the strange sounds in her father's room, would be compelled to come. He felt almost gay. On that evening he had told Natalie that he thought his struggle might come to a breaking point that night and had asked her to be ready for him. There was a train that would leave town at four in the morning. "Perhaps we shall be able to take that," he had said.

"I'll talk to mother and sister myself and I'll be waiting for you," Natalie had said and now there was his wife, standing pale and trembling, as though about to fall and looking from the Virgin between her candles to his naked body and then there was the sound of someone moving in his daughter's room.

And now her door crept open an inch, softly, and he went at once and threw it completely open. "Come in," he said. "Both of you come in. Go sit there on the bed together. I've something to say to you both." There was a commanding ring in his voice.

There was no doubt the women were both, for the moment at least, completely frightened and cowed. How pale they both were. The daughter put her hands to her face and ran across the room to sit upright holding to a railing at the foot of the bed and still holding one hand over her eyes and his wife walked across and fell face downward on the bed. She made a continuous little moaning sound for a time and then buried her face in the bed-clothes and became silent. There was no doubt both women thought him completely insane.

He addressed his daughter. "Well, Jane," he began, speaking with great earnestness and in a clear quiet voice, "I can see you are frightened and upset by what is going on here and I do not blame you. The truth is that it was all planned. For a week now you have been lying awake in your bed in the next room there and hearing me move about in here and in that room over there your mother has been lying. There is something I have been wanting to say to you and your mother, but as you know there has never been any habit of talk in this house.

"The truth is I have wanted to startle you and I guess I have succeeded in that."

He walked across the room and sat on the bed between his daughter and the heavy inert body of his wife. They were both dressed in night-gowns and his daughter's hair had fallen down about her shoulders. It was like his wife's hair when he had married her. Then her hair had been just such a golden yellow and when the sun shone on it coppery and brown lights sometimes appeared.

"I'm going away from this house to-night. I'm not going to live with your mother any more," he said, leaning forward and looking at the floor.

He straightened his body and for a long time sat looking at his daughter's body. It was young and slender. She would not be extraordinarily tall like her mother, but would be a woman of the medium height. He studied her body carefully. Once, when she was a child of six, Jane had been ill for nearly a year and he remembered now that during that time she had been very precious to him. It was during a year when the business had gone badly and he thought he might have to go into bankruptcy at any moment, but he had managed to keep a trained nurse in the house during the whole period of her illness. Every day during that time he came home from the factory at noon and went into his daughter's room.

There was no fever. What was wrong? He had thrown the bed-clothes off the child's body and had looked at it. She was very thin then and the little bones of the body could be plainly seen. There was just the tiny bony structure over which the fair white skin was drawn.

The doctors had said it was a matter of malnutrition, that the food given the child did not nourish it, and they could not find the right food. The mother had been unable to nurse the child. Sometimes during that period he stood for long minutes looking at



the child whose tired listless eyes looked back at him. The tears ran from his own eyes.

It was very strange. Since that time and after she had suddenly begun to grow well and strong again he had in some way lost all track of his daughter. Where had he been in the meantime and where had she been? They were two people and they had been living in the same house all these years. What was it that shut people off from each other? He looked carefully at his daughter's body, now clearly outlined under the thin night-gown. She had rather slender hips, like a boy's hips, but her shoulders were broad. How her body trembled. How afraid she was. "I am a stranger to her and it is not surprising," he thought. He leaned forward and looked at her bare feet. They were small and well made. Perhaps sometime a lover would come to kiss them. Sometime a man would feel concerning her body as he now felt concerning the strong hard body of Natalie Swartz.

His silence seemed to have aroused his wife, who turned and looked at him. Then she sat up on the bed and he sprang to his feet and stood confronting her. "John," she said again in a hoarse whisper as though wishing to call him back to her out of some dark mysterious place. Her mouth opened and closed two or three times like the mouth of a fish taken out of the water. He looked away and paid no more attention to her and she again put her face down among the bed-clothes.

"What I wanted, long ago, when Jane was a tiny thing, was simply that life come into her and that is what I want now. That's all I do want. That's what I'm after now," John Webster thought.

He began walking up and down the room again, having a sense of great leisure. Nothing would happen. Now his wife had again fallen into the ocean of silence. She would lie there on the bed and say nothing, do nothing until he had finished saying what he had to say and had gone away. His daughter was blind and dumb with fear now, but perhaps he could warm the fear out of her. "I must go about this matter slowly, take my time, tell her everything," he thought. The frightened girl now took her hand from before her eyes and looked at him. Her mouth trembled and then a word was formed. "Father," she said appealingly.

He smiled at her reassuringly and made a movement with his arm towards the Virgin, sitting so solemnly between the two candles. "Look up there for a moment while I talk to you," he said.

He plunged at once into an explanation of his situation.

"There has been something broken," he said. "It is the habit of life in this house. Now you will not understand, but sometime you will.

"For years I have not been in love with this woman here, who is your mother and has been my wife, and now I have fallen into love with another woman. Her name is Natalie and to-night, after you and I have had our talk, she and I are going away to live together."

On an impulse he went and knelt on the floor at his daughter's feet and then quickly sprang up again. "No, that's not right. I am not to ask her forgiveness, I am to tell her of things," he thought.

"Well now," he began again, "you are going to think me insane and perhaps I am. I don't know. Anyway my being here in this room with the Virgin and without any clothes, the strangeness of all this will make you think me insane. Your mind will cling to that thought. It will want to cling to that thought," he said aloud. "It may turn out so for a time."

He seemed puzzled as to how to say all the things he wanted to say. The whole matter, the scene in the room, the talk with his daughter that he had planned so carefully was going to be a harder matter to handle than he had thought. He had thought there would be a kind of final significance in his nakedness and in the presence of the Virgin and her candles. Had he upset the stage? he wondered, and kept looking with eyes filled with anxiety at his daughter's face. It told him nothing. She was just frightened and clinging to the railing at the foot of the bed as one cast suddenly into the sea might cling to a floating piece of wood. His wife's body lying on the bed had a strange rigid look. Well there had for years been something rigid and cold in the woman's body. Perhaps she had died. That would be a thing to have happen. It would be something he had not counted upon. It was rather strange, now that he came to face the problem before him, how very little the presence of his wife had to do with the matter in hand.

He stopped looking at his daughter and began walking up and down and as he walked he talked. In a calm, although slightly strained voice he began trying to explain first of all the presence of the Virgin and the candles in the room. He was speaking now to some person, not his own daughter, but just a human being like himself. Immediately he felt relieved. "Well, now. That's the ticket. That's the way to go at things," he thought. For a long time

he went on talking and walking thus up and down. It was better not to think too much. One had to cling to the faith that the thing he had so recently found within himself and within Natalie was somewhere alive in her too. Before that morning, when the whole matter between himself and Natalie began, his life had been like a beach covered with rubbish and lying in darkness. The beach was covered with old dead water-logged trees and stumps. The twisted roots of old trees stuck up into the darkness. Before it lay the heavy sluggish inert sea of life.

And then there had come this storm within and now the beach was clean. Could he keep it clean? Could he keep it clean so that it would sparkle in the morning light?

He was trying to tell his daughter Jane something about the life he had lived in the house with her and why, before he could talk to her, he had been compelled to do something extraordinary, like bringing the Virgin into his room and taking from his own body the clothes that, when he wore them, would make him seem in her eyes just the goer in and out of the house, the provider of bread and clothes for herself, she had always known.

Speaking very clearly and slowly, as though afraid he would get off the track, he told her something of his life as a business man, of how little essential interest he always had in the affairs that had occupied all his days.

He forgot about the Virgin and for a time spoke only of himself. He came again to sit beside her and once as he talked boldly put his hand on her leg. The flesh was cold under her thin night-gown.

"I was a young thing as you are now, Jane, when I met the woman who is your mother and who was my wife," he explained. "You must try to adjust your mind to the thought that both your mother and I were once young things like yourself.

"I suppose your mother, when she was your age must have been very much as you are now. She would of course have been somewhat taller. I remember that her body was at that time very long and slender. I thought it very lovely then.

"I have cause to remember your mother's body. She and I first met each other through our bodies. At first there was nothing else, just our naked bodies. We had that and we denied it. Perhaps upon that everything might have been built, but we were too ignorant or too cowardly. It is because of what happened between your mother and myself that I have brought you into my own naked presence and

have brought this picture of the Virgin in here. I have a desire to in some way make the flesh a sacred thing to you."

His voice had grown soft and reminiscent and he took his hand from his daughter's leg and touched her cheeks and then her hair. He was frankly making love to her now and she had somewhat fallen under his influence. He reached down and taking one of her hands held it tightly.

"We met, you see, your mother and I, at the house of a friend. Although, until a few weeks ago, when I suddenly began to love another woman, I had not for years thought about that meeting, it is at this moment as clear in my mind as though it had happened here, in this house, to-night.

"The whole thing, of which I now want to tell you the details, happened right here in this town, at the house of a man who was at that time my friend. Now he is dead, but at that time we were constantly together. He had a sister, a year younger than himself, of whom I was fond, but although we went about together a good deal, she and I were not in love with each other. Afterward she married and moved out of town.

"There was another young woman, the very woman who is now your mother, who was coming to that house to visit my friend's sister and as they lived at the other end of town and as my father and mother were away from town on a visit I was asked to visit there too. It was to be a kind of special occasion. The Christmas holidays were coming on and there were to be many parties and dances.

"A thing happened to me and your mother that was not at bottom so unlike the thing that has happened to you and me here to-night," he said sharply. He had grown a little excited again and thought he had better get up and walk. Dropping his daughter's hand he sprang to his feet and for a few minutes walked nervously about. The whole thing, the startled fear of him that kept going and coming in his daughter's eyes and the inert silent presence of his wife, was making what he wanted to do more difficult than he had imagined it would be. He looked at his wife's body lying silent and motionless on the bed. How many times he had seen the same body, lying just in that way. She had submitted to him long ago and had been submitting to the life in himself ever since. The figure his mind had made, 'an ocean of silence,' fitted her well. She had always been silent. At the best all she had learned from life was a half-resentful habit of submission. Even when she talked to him she did not really

talk. It was odd indeed that Natalie out of her silence could say so many things to him while he and this woman in all their years together had said nothing really touching each other's lives.

He looked from the motionless body of the older woman to his daughter and smiled. "I can enter into her," he thought exultant. "She cannot shut me out of herself, does not want to shut me out of herself." There was something in his daughter's face that told him what was going on in her mind. The younger woman now sat looking at the figure of the Virgin and it was evident that the dumb fright that had taken such complete possession of her when she was ushered abruptly into the room and the presence of the naked man was beginning a little to loosen its grip. In spite of herself she was thinking. There was the man, her own father, moving nude like a tree in winter about the room and occasionally stopping to look at her, the dim light, the Virgin with the candles burning beneath, and the figure of her mother lying on the bed. Her father was trying to tell her some story she wanted to hear. In some way it concerned herself, some vital part of herself. There was no doubt it was wrong, terribly wrong for the story to be told and for her to listen, but she wanted to hear the story now.

"After all I was right," John Webster was thinking. "Such a thing as has happened here might make or utterly ruin a woman of Jane's age, but as it is everything will come out right. She has a streak of cruelty in her too. There is a kind of health in her eyes now. She wants to know. After this experience she will perhaps no longer be afraid of the dead. It is the dead who are for ever frightening the living."

He took up the thread of his tale as he walked up and down in the dim light.

"A thing happened to your mother and me. I went to my friend's house in the early morning and your mother was to arrive on a train in the late afternoon. There were two trains, one at noon and the other in the afternoon about five, and as she would have to get up in the middle of the night to take the first one we all supposed she would come later. My friend and I had planned to spend the day hunting rabbits on the fields near town and we got back to his house about four.

"There would be time enough for us to bathe and dress ourselves before the guest arrived. When we got home my friend's mother and sister had gone out and we supposed there was no one in the

house but a servant. In reality the guest, you see, had arrived on the train at noon, but that we did not know and the servant did not tell us. We hurried up stairs to undress and then went down stairs and into a shed to bathe. At that time people had no bath-tubs in their houses and the servant had filled two wash-tubs with water and had put them in the shed. After she had filled the tubs she disappeared, got herself out of the way.

"We were running about the house naked as I am doing here now. What happened was that I came naked out of that shed down stairs and climbed the stairs to the upper part of the house, going to my room. The day had grown warm and now it was almost dark."

Again John Webster came to sit with his daughter on the bed and to hold one of her hands.

"I went up the stairs and along a hallway and opening a door went across a room to what I thought was my bed, where I had laid out the clothes I had brought that morning in my bag.

"You see what had happened was that your mother had got out of her bed in her own town at midnight on the night before and when she arrived at my friend's house his mother and sister had insisted she undress and get into bed. She had not unpacked her bag, but had thrown off her clothes and had got in between the sheets as naked as I was when I walked in upon her. As the day had turned warm she had I suppose grown somewhat restless and in stirring about had thrown the bed-clothes to one side.

"She lay, you see, quite nude on the bed, in the uncertain light, and as I had no shoes on my feet I made no sound when I came into her.

"It was an amazing moment for me. I had walked directly to the bed and there she was within a few inches of my hands as they hung by my side. It was your mother's most lovely moment with me. As I have said she was then very slender and her long body was white like the sheets of the bed. At that time I had never before been in the presence of a woman undressed. I had just come from the bath. It was like a kind of wedding, you see.

"How long I stood there looking at her I don't know, but anyway she knew I was there. Her eyes came up to me out of sleep like a swimmer out of the sea. Perhaps, it is just possible, she had been dreaming of me or of some other man.

"At any rate and for just a moment she was not frightened or startled at all. It was really our wedding moment, you see.



"O had we only known how to live up to that moment. I stood there looking at her and she was there on the bed looking at me. There must have been a glowing something alive in our eyes. I did not know then all I felt, but long afterward, sometimes, when I was walking in the country or riding on a train, I thought. Well, what did I think? It was evening you see. I mean that afterwards, sometimes, when I was alone, when it was evening and I was alone I looked off across hills or I saw a river making a white streak down below as I stood on a cliff. What I mean to say is that I have spent all these years trying to recapture that moment and now it is dead."

John Webster threw out his hands with a gesture of disgust and then got quickly off the bed. His wife's body had begun to stir and now she lifted herself up. For a moment her rather huge figure was crouched on the bed and she looked like some great animal on all fours, sick and trying to get up and walk.

And then she did get up, putting her feet firmly on the floor and walking slowly out of the room without looking at the two people. Her husband stood with his back pressed against the wall of the room and watched her go. "Well, that's the end of her," he thought grimly. The door that led into her room came slowly towards him. Now it was closed. "Some doors have to be closed for ever too," he told himself.

He was still in his daughter's presence and she was not afraid of him. He went to a closet and getting out his clothes began to dress. That he realized was a terrible moment. Well, he was playing the cards he held in his hand to the limit. He had been nude. Now he had to get into his clothes. An absurd notion came to him. "Has my daughter a sense of moments? Will she help me now?" he asked himself.

And then his heart jumped. His daughter Jane had done a quite lovely thing. There was a certain garment that had to be put on and buttoned. While he did that she turned and threw herself face downward on the bed, in the same position in which her mother had been but a moment before.

"I walked out of her room into the hallway," he explained. "My friend had come up stairs and was standing in the hallway lighting a lamp that was fastened to a bracket on the wall. You can perhaps imagine the things that were going through my mind. My friend looked at me, as yet knowing nothing. You see, he did not yet know that woman was in the house, but he had seen me walk out of the



room. He had just lighted the lamp when I came out and closed the door behind me and the light fell on my face. There must have been something that startled him. Later we never spoke of the matter at all. As it turned out everyone was embarrassed and made self-conscious by what had occurred and what was still to occur.

"I must have walked out of the room like a man walking in sleep. What was in my mind? What had been in my mind when I stood there beside her naked body and even before that? It was a situation that might not occur again in a lifetime. You have just now seen how your mother went out of this room. You are wondering, I dare say, what is in her mind. I can tell you of that. There is nothing in her mind. She has made her mind a blank empty place into which nothing that matters can come. She has spent a lifetime at that, as I dare say most people have.

"As for that evening when I stood in the hallway, with the light of that lamp shining on me and with my friend looking and wondering what was the matter—that, after all, is what I must try to tell you about."

He was partially dressed now and again Jane was sitting upright on the bed. He came to sit in his shirt sleeves beside her. Long afterward she remembered how extraordinarily young he looked at that moment. He seemed intent on making her understand fully everything that had happened. "Well, you understand," he said slowly, "that, although she had seen my friend and his sister before, she had never seen me. At the same time she knew I was to stay in the house during her visit. No doubt she had been having thoughts about the strange young man she was to meet and it is also true I had been having thoughts about her.

"Even at the moment when I walked, thus nude, into her presence she was a living thing in my mind. And when she came up to me, out of sleep you see, before she had time to think, I was a living thing to her then. What living things we were to each other we dared understand but for a moment. I know that now, but for many years after that happened I didn't know and was only confused.

"I was confused also when I came out into the hallway and stood before my friend. You understand that he did not yet know she was in the house. I had to tell him something and it was like having to tell in some public way the secret of what happens between two people in a moment of love.

"It can't be done, you understand, and so there I stood stammer-

ing and making things worse every minute. I must have had a guilty look on my face and right away I began to feel guilty, although when I was in that room standing by the bed, as I have explained, I didn't feel guilty at all, quite the contrary in fact.

"I went naked into that room and stood beside the bed and that woman is in there now, all naked," I said.

"My friend was of course amazed. 'What woman?' he asked.

"I tried to explain. 'Your sister's friend. She is in there naked on the bed and I went in and stood beside her. She came on the train at noon,' I said.

"You see, I appeared to know all about everything. I felt guilty. That was what was the matter with me. I suppose I stammered and acted confused. 'He'll never believe it was an accident now. He'll think I am up to something strange,' I thought immediately. Whether he ever had all or any of the thoughts that went through my mind at that moment and of which I was in a way accusing him I never found out. I was always a stranger in that house after that moment. You see, what I had done, to have been made quite clear would have required a good deal of whispered explanation that I never offered and, even after your mother and I were married, things were never as they had been between me and my friend.

"And so I stood there stammering and he was looking at me with a puzzled startled look in his eyes. The house was very quiet and I remember how the light of the lamp, in its bracket on the wall, fell on our two naked bodies. My friend, the man who was the witness of that moment of vital drama in my life, is dead now. He died some eight years ago and your mother and I dressed ourselves in our best clothes and went in a carriage to his funeral and later to a graveyard to watch his body being put away into the ground, but at that moment he was very much alive and I shall always continue to think of him as he was then. We had been tramping about all day in the fields and he, like myself, had just come, you remember, from the bath. His young body was very slender and strong and it made a glowing white mark against the dark wall of the hallway, against which he stood.

"Were we both expecting something more to happen, waiting for something more to happen? We did not speak to each other again, but stood in silence. Perhaps he was only startled by my statement of what I had just done and by something a little strange in the way I had told him. Ordinarily after such an incident there would

have been a kind of giggling confusion, the thing would have been passed off as a kind of secret and delicious joke, but I had killed all possibility of its being taken that way by something in the way I had looked and acted when I came out to him. I was, I suppose, at the same time both too conscious and not conscious enough of the significance of what I had done.

"And so we just stood in silence looking at each other and then the door downstairs, that led to the street, opened and his mother and sister came into the house. They had taken advantage of the fact that their guest had gone to sleep and had walked to the business part of town to do some shopping.

"As for myself. What was going on within me at that moment is the hardest thing of all to explain. I had difficulty getting hold of myself, of that you may be sure. What I think now, at this moment, is that then, at that moment long ago when I stood there naked in that hallway beside my friend, something had gone out of me that I could not immediately get back.

"Perhaps when you have grown older you will understand as you cannot understand now."

John Webster looked long and hard at his daughter who also looked at him. For both of them the story he was telling had become a rather impersonal one. The woman, who was so closely connected to them both as wife and mother, had gone quite out of the tale as she had but a few moments before gone stumbling out of the room.

"You see," he said slowly, "what I did not then understand, could not then have been expected to understand, was that I had really gone out of myself in love to the woman on the bed in the room. No one understands that a thing of that sort may occur like a thought flashing across the mind. What I am nowadays coming to believe and would like to get fixed in your mind, young woman, is that such moments come into all lives, but that in all the millions of people who are born and live long or short lives only a few ever really come to find out what life is like. There is a kind of perpetual denial of life, you understand.

"I was dazed as I stood in the hallway outside that woman's room long ago. There had been a flashing kind of something between the woman and myself, in the moment I have described to you, when she came up to me out of sleep. Something deep in our two beings had been touched and I could not quickly recover. There had been a marriage, something intensely personal to our two selves and by

chance it had been made a kind of public affair. I suppose it would have turned out the same way had we two been alone in the house. We were very young. Sometimes I think all the people in the world are very young. They cannot carry the fire of life when it flashes to life in their hands.

"And in the room, behind the closed door, the woman must have been having, at just that moment, some such feeling as myself. She had raised herself up and was now sitting on the edge of the bed. She was listening to the sudden silence of the house as my friend and I were listening. It may be an absurd thing to say, but it is nevertheless true that my friend's mother and sister, who had just come into the house, were both, in some unconscious way, affected also as they stood with their coats on, down stairs, also listening.

"Just then, at that moment, in the room in the darkness, the woman began to sob like a broken-hearted child. There had been a thing quite tremendous come to her and she could not hold it. To be sure the immediate cause of her weeping that way, the way in which she would have explained her grief, was shame. That was what she thought had happened to her, that she had been put into a shameful ridiculous position. She was a young girl. I dare say that thoughts had already come into her mind concerning what all the others would think. At any rate I know that at the moment and afterwards I was more pure than herself.

"The sound of her sobbing rang through the house and down stairs my friend's mother and sister, who had been standing and listening as I have said, now ran to the foot of the stairway leading up.

"As for myself, I did what must have seemed to all the others a ridiculous, almost a criminal thing. I ran to the door leading into the bedroom and tearing it open ran in, slamming the door behind me. It was by this time almost completely dark in the room, but without hesitation I ran to her. She was sitting on the edge of the bed and as she sobbed her body rocked back and forth. She was, at that moment, like a slender young tree, standing in an open field, without any other trees to protect it. She was shaken as by a great storm, that's what I mean.

"And so you see, I ran to her and threw my arms about her body.

"The thing that had happened to us before happened once again, for the last time in our lives. She gave herself to me, that's what I am trying to say. There was another marriage. For just a moment

she became altogether quiet and in the uncertain light her face was turned up to mine. From her eyes came that same look, as of one coming up to me, out of a deep buried place, out of the sea or something like that. I have always thought of the place out of which she came as the sea.

"I dare say if any one but you heard me tell this and if I had told it to you under less strange circumstances you would only have thought me a romantic fool. 'She was startled,' you would say and I dare say she was. But also there was this other. Even though it was dark in the room I felt the thing glowing deep down in her and then coming up, straight up to me. The moment was unspeakably lovely. It lasted for but a fraction of a second, like the snapping of the shutter of a camera, and then it passed.

"I still held her tightly and the door opened and in the doorway stood my friend and his mother and sister. He had taken the lamp from its bracket on the wall and held it in his hand. She sat quite naked on the bed and I stood beside her, with one knee on the edge of the bed, and with my arms thrown about her."

*To be continued*

## ON A GATE TOWER AT YU-CHOU

BY CH'ÊN TZŪ-ANG

*Translated from the Chinese by Witter Bynner and Kiang-Kang-hu*

Where, before me, are the ages that have gone?  
 And where, behind me, are the coming generations?  
 I think of heaven and earth, without limit, without end,  
 And I am all alone and my tears fall down.



*Courtesy of Wildenstein and Company*

**A HEAD. BY GEORGE BIDDLE**

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## GERMAN LETTER

*Munich*

*November, 1922*

SO it has been decided: I shall tell the readers of *THE DIAL* now and then of the cultural life in my home country, that European province which is known to citizens of the Union under the name of Germany and with which, if I remember rightly, America was recently at war. America, which, according to our own Goethe, "is better off" than this aged continent with its "crumbling castles" and its "basalts," things which for Goethe, however, who mentions them with a sigh, are merely symbols of much deeper burdens and picturesquely melancholy differentiations of the European mind—burdens, differentiations which, to America's athletic astonishment, have prevented the unity of Europe up to now and will most likely prevent it to the bitter end. On the surface at least, after the world war we are more widely removed than ever from the chance of constructing the cis-atlantic counterpart to the United States. And America, mighty, bright-eyed, unweighted by history, must be somewhat disillusioned to observe that its decisive participation in the war has helped to increase rather than decrease the European system of small states which Nietzsche found so ridiculous. This small portion of the world previously comprised twenty-seven nations; it can now count thirty-five—and for the most part, skilled statesmen such as the astute Signor Nitti assure us, they are artificial products lacking durability.

In short, things are in a bad way. And we should despair for the salvation of this old, misery-tried, but still unwise Europe except that despite all the wretchedness, despite a war which must be voted a loss for all parties, and despite the strengthening of nationalistic passions which the war has occasioned everywhere, a feeling has arisen as though European nations had begun almost imperceptibly to draw closer together. This movement is partly along economic lines—for even the most heated chauvinist is coming to see that the material rehabilitation of the continent can be accomplished only through concerted action—and partly also in the sense of a new impetus to spiritual commerce and a mutual

cultural curiosity, a phenomenon which is so unmistakable that we are reminded of the words of Novalis: a closer *rapprochement* among nations has always been the historical function of war.

For a long time Goethe's idea of a "world-literature"—a German idea, I modestly beg to add—has been extensively realized. The equalization is universal, the democratic levelling is nearly attained. There are Frenchmen who manifest a broad British humour (Proust) denatured, Parisianized Russians (Kusmin) and Scandinavians who complete the synthesis of Dostoevsky and America (Jensen). This may be termed the internationalization of art—a process, to be sure, which does not prevent the various folk-characters from remaining even now genuinely and uncompromisingly opposed to an incredible extent. Still, that is simply another incentive to the curiosity I was speaking of; and the cultural life of Europe was never more plainly "in the sign of trade" than since the great war. Translating flourishes. Even Germany, the world's scapegoat, has its part in this prosperity; for its spiritual products are reaching the outside world in greater numbers than before. Not only the Slavic and the Scandinavian countries—as was always the case—but also France, Italy, Spain, America are taking them into their languages; and that is certainly not merely an accident of the exchange nor a form of exploitation. It is curiosity, as I have said, and we have every reason to exert ourselves that this curiosity may not be too greatly disappointed.

America—whose responsible participation in the sphere of Occidental culture may have been brought drastically to its attention by the need of entering the war—has quite obviously a great share in the movement I am speaking of. Every title-page of the review for which I am now writing is an evidence and an example of my contention. For each one displays in varied array along with the names of Anglo-Saxon writers those of any other nationality. And is it not to this cosmopolitan view that I owe the pleasure of being able to address the readers of *THE DIAL*?

Indeed, I am delighted with this opportunity! It satisfies that world-need which lies in the blood of every German artist, and which had to languish during the years of isolation and sterile discord. It touches my imagination. I shall "make something of it," as the good highly poetic idiom puts it. I am almost on the point of considering my position as sublime. See: I sit in my room in

Munich and discuss German affairs with inhabitants of the other hemisphere. I write this letter; it is carried over the rolling wilderness of the ocean; on the other side it is translated into the language of Poe, Emerson, and Whitman. And my words will be followed with friendliness and sympathy by a bold and kindly-disposed type of mankind which is in many ways remarkable for its qualities of body and spirit. That is beautiful. A contenting waft of humanity comes over me at the thought of such bonds and such comradeship. And perhaps it is feelings, moods, and leanings of this sort which make me resent that doctrine of history and "biology of culture" full of stony scepticism and false rigour with which a strong mind has recently jolted us, and according to which "mankind" becomes again nothing but a hollow word without meaning; while history is simply a life-process of biological units or cultures which develop restlessly in obedience to set laws and entirely beyond the determination of man.

I have in mind the great work of Oswald Spengler, that two-volume colossus of which the crassly catastrophic title (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*; Decay, or "Setting" of the Occident) has surely already reached the ears of the American public; for the din which its appearance occasioned here was strong enough to carry even across the ocean. This book is a gigantic success; and since America likes to hear of gigantic successes I shall be content with this as the first subject to come under my pen. The earlier volume was exhausted soon after its appearance, and the author is now withholding it from further circulation until he has made improvements in it. But the second, which came out a few weeks ago, has already sold 70,000 copies—which for German conditions is a very high figure, especially if one takes into account that we are not dealing with a so-called entertaining production, a novel, but with a profound philosophic work bearing the frightfully learned subtitle: *Attempt at a Morphology of World-History*. So that leaving aside all considerations of disagreement, one may look even with a national pride on a success for which, perhaps, conditions were no better fitted anywhere else than in Germany.

We are an uprooted people. The catastrophes which have befallen us; the war; the overthrow of a governmental system which we had considered impregnable, *aere perennius*; further, economic and social readjustments of the most radical nature . . . in

short the stormiest of experiences have set the national mind in a keyed-up state such as it had not known for a long time. The general spiritual situation of the world increases this tension. Everything is in a condition of flux. The natural sciences which, it seemed at the turn of the century, had nothing left to do but certify and elaborate what was already discovered, stand in all points at the beginnings of something new; their revolutionary fantasies must make it hard indeed for the investigator to remain cold-blooded, and they produce a popular repercussion far and wide among the laity. The arts are lying at a complete crisis which sometimes threatens to lead towards extinction and at other times lets us look to the possible creation of new forms. Problems flow into one another; we cannot keep them apart, cannot exist simply as politicians without knowing something about things of the mind, nor as aesthetes, as "pure artists," content to let all matters of social consciousness go hang. The question of man himself, of which all the others are merely facets and side-issues, never stood more ominously, more imperatively, before the eyes of those who take life earnestly. And is it any wonder that the afflicted defeated peoples, upon whom the consciousness of a transition has forced itself so immediately, should be the most heavily conscience-stricken and be the most sharply incited to active thinking? In Germany since the beginning of the war there has been much thinking and much discussion, discussion of a kind which is almost Russian in its boundlessness. And if that statesman was right who declared that democracy is discussion, then we to-day are a democracy indeed. We may now even call ourselves republicans, in a deeper and weightier sense than the constitutional one, provided that republicanism signify a feeling of responsibility and accountability—for this feeling also has spread and deepened here with us, despite the deceptive superficial evidence of a shabby frivolity.

Reading has become a passion. And it is not done to amuse or to lull, but in the search for spiritual weapons and in the interest of truth. *Belles lettres*, in the more restricted sense, fall noticeably behind the critico-philosophical or intellectual essay. More accurately: an extensive fusion had been enacted between the spheres of criticism and poetry. It was already begun by our Romantics, and was greatly accelerated by the phenomenon of Nietzsche's lyrical treatment of knowledge. This procedure destroys the boundaries between art and science, imbues ideas with the blood of life, spirit-

ualizes form, and gives rise to a type of book which, if I am not mistaken, is the most prominent with us at present and which might be called the "intellectual novel." In this class belong works like the *Reisetagebuch Eines Philosophen* by Count Hermann Keyserling, the beautiful Nietzsche-book by Ernest Bertram, and the monumental Goethe of Gundolf, the prophet of Stefan George. And on account of its literary brilliance and the intuitive-rhapsodical nature of its treatment of culture, Spengler's *Untergang* belongs here unquestionably. Its effect has been by far the most sensational; and it has certainly fallen in perfectly with that wave of "historical pessimism" which is quite naturally—as Benedetto Croce said—moving across Germany.

Spengler denies that he is a pessimist. Nor is he any more willing to be termed an optimist. He is a fatalist. But his fatalism—summed up in the sentence, "We must will either the inevitable, or nothing"—is far removed from the tragic-heroic character, the Dionysian, in which Nietzsche dissolved the opposition between pessimism and optimism. It bears rather the character of a malicious apodicticity and of a hostility to the future masking under the guise of a scientific relentlessness. It is not *amor fati*. Precisely *amor* is the least of his concerns—and that is what makes the work repulsive. The question is not one of pessimism or optimism: one can have very dark thoughts on the fate of man, who is perhaps eternally condemned or devoted to suffering. When the talk is of "happiness," of some suppositional "happiness" waiting for us somewhere or other, one can ensconce oneself in the deepest pessimism; without acquiring thereby the least touch of that professional uncongeniality which marks the Spenglerian pessimism. Pessimism is not coldness. It does not necessarily mean a clammily "scientific" charting of a process and the inimical unconcern with such *imponderabilia* as are offered by the human mind and the human will inasmuch as they add to a process just that element of irrationality, perhaps, which lifts it beyond the reach of scientific calculations. But Spengler stands for just such presumptions and just such disinterest in the human equation. If only he were frightfully cynical! But he is merely . . . "fatal." And it is unfair of him to name Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche as the precursors of his hyena-like pontifications. They were men. But he is simply a defeatist of humanity.

I am speaking as though my audience had read the *Untergang*

des Abendlandes. I do this since I rely on the world-wide fame which this work has attained, thanks to powerful qualities which no one denies it. His doctrine, briefly and roughly stated, is this: History is the life-process of vegetative and structural organisms which are known as cultures and which possess an individual physiognomy and a limited period of existence. Up to the present eight of these cultures can be counted: Egyptian, Indian, Babylonian, Chinese, Graeco-Roman, Arabic, Occidental (our own) and the culture of the Mayas in Central America. But although alike in their general structure and their general destiny, these cultures are strictly isolated existences, each one inseparably bound to its own laws of thinking, seeing, and experiencing, and none of them understands a word of what any of the others says or means. Only Herr Spengler understands them, conglomerately and individually, and it is a real pleasure to observe how he can speak and sing of each of them. Aside from this, as has been said, the deepest incomprehensibility reigns; and it is ludicrous to speak of any continuity in life, of that ultimate spiritual unity, that humanity, which—according to Novalis—is the star, the purer meaning of our planet, and which binds it as a member to the upper world. There is no use recalling that a single work of love—like Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*, which makes a complete organic, human fusion between the old Chinese lyric and the most complex phases of modern musical development—throws overboard the whole theory of any radical estrangement between cultures. Since there is no one type of mankind—according to Spengler—there is also no one system of mathematics, or painting, or physics; but there are as many systems of mathematics, painting, and physics as there are cultures . . . And they are all fundamentally different things, a Babylonian muddle of tongues. Except that, once again, Herr Spengler is graced with the intuition for understanding them all. Each culture, he says, runs through the life-cycle of an individual man. Born out of a maternal landscape, it blossoms, ripens, wilts, and dies. It dies after it has completely lived out its character, after it has exhausted all the picturesque possibilities of expression contained in its nature, such as: nations, religions, literatures, arts, sciences, and forms of government. The old age of each culture—marking the transition to annihilation, to a death of torpor, to an existence without history—we term “civilization.” But since each period in a culture's age



corresponds to a similar period in all other cultures, we have first of all a new and amusing concept of "contemporaneity"; but in the second place this signifies for the initiate an astronomical certainty concerning the outcome of the future. For instance, it is quite certain what is in store for our own culture, the Occidental, which passed into the old age of civilization at the beginning of the nineteenth century and whose immediate future will be "contemporary" with the century of the Roman soldier-emperors. It is certain, astronomically, biologically, morphologically. It is frightfully certain. And if there is anything more frightful than this destiny, then it is the man who bears it without raising a finger in protest.

Yet our steely savant calls on us to do this very thing. We must will the inevitable or nothing, he says; and he does not notice that this is not an alternative and that the man who wills only that which a pitiless science declares to be inevitable simply ceases to will—which, further, is not very human. What, then, is this inevitable? It is the decay of the Occident, the promise of coming wretchedness—not precisely decay *sans phrase*, not in the physical sense, although a great deal of physical decay will be bound up with it as well—but the decay of the Occident as a culture. Even a China still exists, and millions of Chinese are living; but the Chinese culture is dead. The same is true of Egypt which since the time of the Romans has been inhabited not by Egyptians, a national and cultural entity, but by fellaheen. According to Spengler fellahdom is the final stage in the life of each people. A people, when its culture has gone through its life-cycle, falls into fellahdom, and becomes without history, just as it was as a primitive people. But the intellectual-political-economic instrument which produces this condition is civilization, the spirit of the city. For it brings into prominence the concept of a fourth estate, the masses. And the masses—which no longer constitute a people—the nomadic life of the great urban centres . . . all that is formlessness, the end, nothing. For the Occident, as for every culture, the advent of formless, traditionless forces (Napoleon) occurs concomitantly with the beginning of civilization. But Napoleonism turns into Caesarism, parliamentary democracy into the dictatorship of specific men who are born and bred as tyrants, unscrupulous economic conquistadors of the type of a Cecil Rhodes. The stage of Caesarism is to be observed in all failing cultures, and lasts a full two hundred years.



In the case of the Chinese it is called the "time of the fighting states." We are in that period. With the beginning of the twentieth century the politics of private power has taken the place of party politics which is always swayed by abstract ideals. The personal force, the great individual, rules over degenerate masses of fellaheen which he treats simply as cannon fodder. A Caesar can return, and shall; but a Goethe never. And it would be silly romanticism to pay any serious attention now to matters of culture, art, poetry, and education. Such things are not fitting for a race of fellaheen. Our literary life, for instance, has nothing to show but a completely unimportant struggle between intellectualistic super-civilized metropolitan art and backward idyllic family art. He who understands our fate bothers himself devilishly little about such twaddle, but confines himself to those things which are the future and which have a future: mechanics, technology, economics, and above all politics. Any one is a fool who has enough goodwill to flatter himself that benevolence, spirit, and the desire for a worthier human order form part of our destiny and can exert a corrective influence on the course of the world. The future is certain: colossal wars of the Caesars for power and booty; streams of blood; and, as to the race of fellaheen, silence and suffering. Man, sunk back into the Zoological, into the Cosmic and the Unhistoric, lives as a peasant bound to his native earth, or putters about among the ruins of former metropolises. As a narcotic his wretched soul invents the so-called "second religiosity," a makeshift for the earlier kind which was cultural and creative; it is futile, and simply leads him to bear his miseries with all the more resignation.

The man who gives us this refreshing prospect is a peculiarly vexatious phenomenon. Although his doctrine seems to be coldly scientific, unimpassioned, raised above all human prejudices, rigidly deterministic, pure observation, nevertheless it in turn shows evidence of a will, an attitude towards life, sympathies and antipathies. Fundamentally it is not unimpassioned, for it is secretly conservative. One does not present such a doctrine, one does not arrange things thus, one does not identify history and culture in that manner, one does not oppose form to spirit with this sharpness, unless he is a conservative, unless in his heart he is affirming form and culture, and hating their dissolution through civilization. The complexity and the perversity of the Spenglerian case consists, or

seems to consist, in the fact that despite this secret fundamental conservatism he does not affirm culture, does not fight for its "conservation," does not simply make pedagogic threats of death and corruption in order to maintain it; but he affirms civilization, forces it upon his will with a fatalistic fury, justifies it over against culture with a cold derision . . . for the future belongs to civilization, and the cultural lacks every prospect of living. This frigidly heroic thinker seems to assume just so gruesome a self-conquest and self-denial. A secret conservative, a champion of culture, he seems to be affirming civilization inversely; but that is simply the appearance of an appearance, a twofold vexation, for he really does affirm it—not only with his words, which his nature opposed, but even with his nature itself.

He is an instance of the very thing which he denies by prophesying its triumph—civilization. His doctrine is saturated with everything that belongs to civilization, everything that constitutes its ingredients: intellectualism, rationalism, relativism, cult of causality, of "natural laws." It consists of all this; and over against its leaden historical materialism the teachings of a Marx are sky-blue idealisms. This is nothing but the nineteenth century, completely *vieux jeu*, bourgeois through and through. And in that it paints civilization apocalyptically on the wall as the coming period, it simply becomes thereby its closing flourish, its swan song.

The author borrows from Goethe the concept of morphology; but in his hands this idea fares very much the same as the Goethian idea of development in the hands of Darwin. He has learned from Nietzsche how to write, and mimics Nietzsche's weighty accents; but his false loveless rigour has not caught the least hint of the nature behind this truly strong and amiable spirit, the inaugurator of something ineffably new. He is hostile to the spirit—not in the sense of culture, but in the sense of the materialistic civilization whose province is our yesterday and not our to-morrow. He is its true son, its last talent, and he prophesies its coming with "pessimistic" relentlessness—meanwhile permitting us to see that he is secretly a conservative champion of culture.

In a word, he is a snob—and shows himself as such also in his attachment to nature, to natural laws, and in his derision of the spiritual. "Should not the changeless laws of nature be considered a deception, and highly unnatural?" asks Novalis; "Everything

operates by law, and nothing operates by law. A law is a simple relationship which is easily left out of account. We hunt laws for convenience' sake." For scientific convenience; and also for the sake of an heroic-apodictic lovelessness. And also for the sake of that self-complacency which—yearning after treason—declares overwhelmingly for nature against man and the spirit, being quite relentless against the latter in favour of the former, but deeming itself just as remarkable as before, and distinguished to boot. But the problem of distinction—bound up principally with the opposition between nature and spirit—is not to be solved by such renegade tactics. And in order to venture a defence of nature against the spirit, as Spengler does, one should belong to the true nobility of nature, like Goethe, who represented it in contrast to Schiller's nobility of the spirit. Otherwise one becomes what I have already termed the talented author of the *Untergang*—namely, a snob—and belongs to that vast number of modern figures who teach, disagreeably enough, what does not apply to their own case.

It speaks for the powers of a book in which I do not believe that I should be betrayed by it into overstepping on this one subject alone the space which has been so kindly allotted me. It must be enough for this time. I hope that my next letter will compensate my readers for the monotony of this one.

THOMAS MANN

## PRAGUE LETTER

November, 1922

BY the time these lines are in print people in New York will probably be engaged in either praising or damning the two imported Czech plays, *R. U. R.*, and *The World We Live In*. Firmin Gemier is to produce *R. U. R.* at the Vieux-Colombier in Paris this winter and the other play is to be put on at Nigel Playfair's new playhouse in London, the Regent Theatre.

If the Czech invasion of Broadway is successful another Capek play may eventually find its way across the Atlantic. Karel Capek has just finished it; at the moment it is only in manuscript.

The *Affair Macropolis* is one of those happy coincidences that happen now and again in the world of making books and plays. The theme of the play is that of Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, the idea of prolonging human life. But there is no suspicion of plagiarism. Capek began his play a long time before he heard about the Shavian *Metabiological Pentateuch*. He is content to call his play merely a Comedy.

In the seventeenth century during the reign of Rudolf the Second, the protector of all alchemists, there lived in Prague a Greek physician, Macropolis, who discovered something that would make a person live for three hundred years. Rudolf refused to be experimented on, so Macropolis gave it to his lovely daughter, Helen. The scene moves forward to modern times. An action is taking place in court over the legal ownership of an estate. Helen appears to give evidence, and because she is able to relate private incidents over a hundred years old she is compelled, with the alternative of being called an impostor, to declare her real age. She discovers that the Macropolis document containing her father's secret, for which she has been searching, is in this very estate. But Helen has the fatal power of her namesake of Troy. She excites the passions of all the men around her. Baron Prus, the owner of the estate, gives her the document in return for a night of love in her arms (a woman with a past of three hundred years should be quite an interesting *amoureuse*). Janek, her son, on learning this, commits suicide. Even her many-times-removed great-grandson is not im-

mune from her fascination. After a long philosophical discussion between the men about the value of the document, Helen offers it to the young girl, Christina, the lover of Janek; and because her lover is dead she takes it and without a word burns it slowly in the flame of a candle. Thus ends the idea of longevity. Shaw's play carries us as far as the Shavian mind can reach—the Vortex and the Whirlpool in Pure Intelligence. Capek's play leaves us imprisoned within our flesh—his mind can only reach out to the ideal of the Mother and Child. But it is a provocative and stimulating play and is sure to create some discussion when it is produced this winter.

Karel Capek is also the dramaturge of the Vinohrady Theatre. This theatre, the home of the intellectual drama in Prague, with an annual expenditure of four million crowns (one hundred thousand dollars) has just been able to obtain a fairly substantial subsidy from the municipality and the State to the tune of five hundred thousand crowns (about twelve thousand dollars). I mention this economic fact because it explains how a theatre with a box-office can dispense with that modern horror, the box-office play. The winter season repertoire ranges through the drama from Aristophanes right up to Knut Hamsun: on the way we meet the names of Racine, Molière, de Musset, Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Byron, Goldoni, Goethe, Pushkin, Strindberg, Ibsen, and Björnson. Surely a sufficiently hearty meal for the most hardened. But the Czechs have the stomachs of peasants and the digestion of a horse.

I don't know whether you celebrated the Shelley Centenary in your country. In England a very unostentatious meeting took place at which the Italian Ambassador gave a speech in English and I believe that Sir Rennell Rodd spoke in the language of Dante (I may have got it all mixed). However it has been left to the Czechs to do the right thing. Without any great fuss they have produced his five-act poetic tragedy, *The Cenci*, a drama that has only been played once in England, and then only privately (as I write this, news comes from England that the Censor has just lifted the hundred-year ban).

#### PAINTING

Last May eleven young Czech painters held their first public exhibition. All of them with one or two exceptions are in their early twenties. The exhibition was retrospective, showing work done as

far back as 1916. It was a little daring to reveal all the ugliness of early beginnings, but no doubt the result was justified. There on the walls was the actual development of each young artist for all the world to see. Feuerstein exhibited fourteen holiday studies of France, Spain, and the Pyrenees; all bright cubistic paintings bearing no special mark of individuality. It was a thousand pities that he did not show his beautiful stage designs for the National Theatre productions of Marlowe's *Edward the Second* and Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire*, which clearly showed the bent of his imagination and his joyous delight in colour. František Muzika showed a dozen paintings composed with the same formula of bright cheerful primary colours arranged on a dry harsh flat surface: in their primitive quality they reminded me very forcibly of some excellent scenes I have seen painted on the walls of a Buddhist temple in India. Some conventionally cubistic drawings were sent by Joseph Sima, now a student in Paris. The two most mature artists among this group are Ladislav Süß and Alois Wachsman. Süß is only twenty-two and full of *Lebensfreudigkeit* which shines through all his work. His landscapes were not all equally good, but when they did come off they expressed the direct vision of an artist sure of himself. There were two pictures that were as good as anything seen in London: an exceptional nude of a woman and a beautiful composition in blue, white, and grey of a young girl and pigeon. Wachsman, a young man studying architecture, has been through all the "isms" and exhibited thirty pictures representing his evolution from the age of nineteen when he was painting ugly portraits up to his latest phase which may be described as the New Classicism. Four pictures stand out in my memory: a Girls Bathing; a Virgin and Child; a Three Graces; a Venus; revealing a wonderful feeling for form. Wachsman seems to have left all the ugly tendencies of early youth behind him and has emerged into a direct expression of pure beauty. He is the most significant young artist from this group. Much of the other work was immature, but on the whole it was an interesting exhibition of young Czech tendencies.

#### NEW GROUPS

There are two groups of young literary people here in Czecho-Slovakia: "Devětsil" in Prague and the "Literary Group" of Brno (the Manchester of Czecho-Slovakia).



"Devětsil" (Nine Powers, or Colt's Foot, the early spring flower) is a Radical group orienting towards Moscow where Lunacharsky fathers the new Proletcult. This group is uncompromisingly Marxian, propagates the idea of Proletcult, and stands for Revolution. But youthful enthusiasm has so far evaded the domination of the dogma and there are one or two poets whose work is worth mention: Seifert and Cerník. Although not the best of the group, Jiří Wolker represents a leavening influence. He is a typical example of what I like to call the "emerging peasant" bringing a smell of the soil into the coffee-house. He has published three small volumes of poems, *The Guest in the House*, *Heavy Hours*, *The Highest Sacrifice*, and two plays, *The Hospital* and *The Grave*. But there is not one among these proletarian poets so forceful, so bitter, and so dynamic as that young German poet and dramatist, Ernst Toller, who is now in prison for his share in the Munich Revolution.

The "Literary Group" publishes a monthly journal, *Host* (The Guest) and in their latest manifesto they attempt to steer a middle course between the purely proletarian and bourgeois art. Götze, the intellectual leader and critic of this group, has a book in the press, *Anarchy in the New Czech Poetry*.

Karel Vaněk, an ambitious young man, has established a literary journal, *Kmen* (The Trunk, of a tree) which is about the size of *The Little Review*. It is open to young writers and painters of any nationality. He would be glad to receive any American work (I do not know if there is any payment attached); address Karel Vaněk, 42 Palackého Nábřeží, Prague.

The ignorance of contemporary American work here is almost criminal; and some of those poets who go tramping in the Rockies might do worse than make a journey in this direction; even if they have to blow their own trumpets and pay for their suppers by reciting their own poetry.

The Czech cultural life is helped by the comparative stability of the Czech economic conditions (how long these will last I cannot say) but at present the fact remains that the people have plenty of money to buy books and pictures, and to patronize the theatres and concerts, while a few hours away poor cultured Vienna is dying.

P. BEAUMONT WADSWORTH



## LONDON LETTER

*November, 1922*

IT requires some effort of analysis to understand why one person, among many who do a thing with accomplished skill, should be greater than the others; nor is it always easy to distinguish superiority from great popularity, when the two go together. I am thinking of Marie Lloyd, who has died only a short time before the writing of this letter. Although I have always admired her genius I do not think that I always appreciated its uniqueness; I certainly did not realize that her death would strike me as the most important event which I have had to chronicle in these pages. Marie Lloyd was the greatest music-hall artist in England: she was also the most popular. And popularity in her case was not merely evidence of her accomplishment; it was something more than success. It is evidence of the extent to which she represented and expressed that part of the English nation which has perhaps the greatest vitality and interest.

Marie Lloyd's funeral became a ceremony which surprised even her warmest admirers:

"The scenes from an early hour yesterday, had been eloquent of the supreme place which Marie Lloyd held in the affection of the people. Wreaths had poured into the house in Woodstock Road from all parts of the country. There were hundreds of them from people whose names are almost household words on the variety stage, and from such people as 'a flower boy' in Piccadilly Circus: the taxi-drivers of Punter's Garage: and the Costermongers' Union of Farringdon Road. . . . Bombardier Wells sent a wreath. It was a white cushion, and across it in violets were the words 'At Rest: With deepest sympathy from Mrs and Billie Wells.' . . . Tributes were also sent by Hetty King, Clarice Mayne, Clara Mayne, Little Tich, Arthur Prince, George Mozart, Harry Weldon, Charles Austin, Gertie Gitana, the Brothers Egbert, Zetta Mare, Julia Neilson, and Fred Terry, Mr and Mrs Frank Curzon, Marie

Loftus, many of the provincial music-halls, the Gulliver halls, and dressers from most of the theatres, and many of Miss Lloyd's old school chums. . . . A favourite song of Miss Lloyd's was recalled by a wreath fashioned like a bird's cage. The cage was open, but the old cock linnet had flown. . . . A large floral horseshoe, with whip, cap, and stirrups, was from 'Her Jockey Pals'—Donoghue, Archibald, and other men famous in the racing world. . . . There were other wreaths from the National Sporting Club, the Eccentric Club, the Ladies' Theatrical Guild, the Variety Artists' Federation, Albert and Mrs Whelan, Lorna and Toots Pound, Kate Carney, Nellie Wallace, the Ring at Blackfriars, Connie Ediss (who sent red roses) the Camberwell Palace (a white arch with two golden gates), Lew Lake, Major J. Arnold Wilson, and innumerable other people."

Among all of that small number of music-hall performers, whose names are familiar to what is called the lower class, Marie Lloyd had far the strongest hold on popular affection. She is known to many audiences in America. I have never seen her perform in America, but I cannot imagine that she would be seen there at her best; she was only seen at her best under the stimulus of those audiences in England, and especially in Cockney London, who had crowded to hear her for thirty years. The attitude of these audiences was different, toward Marie Lloyd, from what it was toward any other of their favourites, and this difference represents the difference in her art. Marie Lloyd's audiences were invariably sympathetic, and it was through this sympathy that she controlled them. Among living music-hall artists none can so well control an audience as Nellie Wallace. I have seen Nellie Wallace interrupted by jeering or hostile comment from a boxful of East-Enders; I have seen her, hardly pausing in her act, make some quick retort that silenced her tormenters for the rest of the evening. But I have never known Marie Lloyd to be confronted by this kind of hostility; in any case the feeling of the vast majority of the audience was so manifestly on her side, that no objector would have dared to lift his voice. And the difference is this: that whereas other comedians amuse their audiences as much and sometimes more than Marie Lloyd, no other comedian succeeded so well in giving expression to

the life of that audience, in raising it to a kind of art. It was, I think, this capacity for expressing the soul of the people that made Marie Lloyd unique and that made her audiences, even when they joined in the chorus, not so much hilarious as happy.

It is true that in the details of acting Marie Lloyd was perhaps the most perfect, in her own line, of British actresses. There are—thank God—no cinema records of her; she never descended to this form of money-making; it is to be regretted, however, that there is no film of her to preserve for the recollection of her admirers the perfect expressiveness of her smallest gestures. But it is more in the thing that she made it, than in the accomplishment of her act, that she differed from other comedians. There was nothing about her of the grotesque; none of her comic appeal was due to exaggeration; it was all a matter of selection and concentration. The most remarkable of the survivors of the music-hall stage, to my mind, are Nellie Wallace and Little Tich; but each of these is a kind of grotesque; their acts are an inconceivable orgy of parody of the human race. For this reason, the appreciation of these artists requires less knowledge of the environment. To appreciate for instance the last turn in which Marie Lloyd appeared, one ought to know already exactly what objects a middle-aged woman of the charwoman class would carry in her bag; exactly how she would go through her bag in search of something; and exactly the tone of voice in which she would enumerate the objects she found in it. This was only part of the acting in Marie Lloyd's last song, *I'm One of the Ruins That Cromwell Knocked Abaht a Bit*.

Marie Lloyd was of London—in fact of Hoxton—and on the stage from her earliest years. It is pleasing to know that her first act was for a Hoxton audience, when at the age of ten she organized the *Fairy Bell Minstrels* for the *Nile Street Mission of the Band of Hope*; at which she sang and acted a song entitled *Throw Down the Bottle and Never Drink Again*, which is said to have converted at least one member of the audience to the cause now enforced by law in America. It was similar audiences to her first audience that supported her to the last.

Marie Lloyd's art will I hope be discussed by more competent critics of the theatre than I. My own chief point is that I consider her superiority over other performers to be in a way a moral superi-

ority: it was her understanding of the people and sympathy for them, and the people's recognition of the fact that she embodied the virtues which they genuinely most respected in private life, that raised her to the position she occupied at her death. And her death is itself a significant moment in English history. I have called her the expressive figure of the lower classes. There has been no such expressive figure for any other class. The middle classes have no such idol: the middle classes are morally corrupt. That is to say, it is themselves and their own life which find no expression in such a person as Marie Lloyd; nor have they any independent virtues as a class which might give them as a conscious class any dignity. The middle classes, in England as elsewhere, under democracy, are morally dependent upon the aristocracy, and the aristocracy are morally in fear of the middle class which is gradually absorbing and destroying them. The lower classes still exist; but perhaps they will not exist for long. In the music-hall comedians they find the artistic expression and dignity of their own lives; and this is not found for any life in the most elaborate and expensive revue. In England, at any rate, the revue expresses almost nothing. With the dwindling of the music-hall, by the encouragement of the cheap and rapid-breeding cinema, the lower classes will tend to drop into the same state of amorphous protoplasm as the bourgeoisie. The working-man who went to the music-hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the work of acting; he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art. He will now go to the cinema, where his mind is lulled by continuous senseless music and continuous action too rapid for the brain to act upon, and he will receive, without giving, in that same listless apathy with which the middle and upper classes regard any entertainment of the nature of art. He will also have lost some of his interest in life. Perhaps this will be the only solution. In a most interesting essay in the recent volume of *Essays on the Depopulation of Melanesia* the great psychologist W. H. R. Rivers adduces evidence which has led him to believe that the natives of that unfortunate archipelago are dying out principally for the reason that the "Civilization" forced upon them has deprived them of all interest in life. They are dying from pure boredom.

When every theatre has been replaced by 100 cinemas, when every musical instrument has been replaced by 100 gramophones, when every horse has been replaced by 100 cheap motor cars, when electrical ingenuity has made it possible for every child to hear its bedtime stories through a wireless receiver attached to both ears, when applied science has done everything possible with the materials on this earth to make life as interesting as possible, it will not be surprising if the population of the entire civilized world rapidly follows the fate of the Melanesians. You will see that the death of Marie Lloyd has had a depressing effect, and that I am quite incapable of taking any interest in any literary events in England in the last two months, if any have taken place.

T. S. ELIOT

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A PORTRAIT OF GEORGE MOORE

A PORTRAIT OF GEORGE MOORE IN A STUDY OF HIS WORK. By John Freeman. 8vo. 250 pages. D. Appleton and Company. \$5.

**T**AKING for granted that the biographer is affectionately pre-disposed, a portrait constructed from a man's work is the most justifiable and the justest sort of biography. In the effort to understand and exhibit Mr Moore's achievements and idiosyncrasies, Mr Freeman has been self-effacing, profound, and unhurried. One does not share every detail of his admiration, but his appreciation is never blind eulogy and now and again he is startlingly fearless in his aloofness, as when he says of Lewis Seymour and Some Women revised, that it is to him like a certain respectable brick building upon which was imposed "a new stucco front with an elaborate cornice above which the old roof still rose steep. The stucco was finished to look like stone, but the stone refused to look like stucco, and the building remains now a sad and haunting image of uncouthly sham."

The more acute an artist is in recognizing perfection, the more alert he is in recognizing blemishes, but it is not to give a photographically accurate bad likeness that Mr Freeman is working. Few artists have chosen and developed a subject with a deeper affection or more insight. In the ingenious selection, moreover, of passages from Montaigne to stand at the beginnings of chapters as indices, we are much enriched—in the lines for instance, prefixed to Chapter II as applying to George Moore in Paris and to The Confessions of a Young Man, but we are warned by Mr Freeman to use discernment in distinguishing the fact from the fiction of these seemingly frank revealings, not however, that the fiction is false. "I often hazard upon certaine outslips of minde for which I distrust myself," says Montaigne, "and certaine verball wiliebeguiles, whereat I shake mine eares"; and although Mr Freeman



admits that "the display of shabby dissoluteness, of crude and plushy splendour" of the Confessions "illuminates a certain aspect of Moore's early work," he points out that it "is obviously remote from the diligence and aristocracy of his mind."

In *Esther Waters*, that wolf-lean, unforgettable romance, "the only English novel that treated a servant-girl seriously," we have George Moore, one would like to think, as his most unself-conscious self—if not, in a rôle which is his most magnificent assumption. He has produced an epic, a life cycle in bleakness, and despite his Paris skin so recently sloughed, not one tawdry sparkle attaches to it. "The most English of all novels," Mr Freeman says, "if Tom Jones and David Copperfield be added." As a line in George Moore's portrait, it is especially commemorative and is fittingly dedicated to Colonel Maurice Moore who called "the surrender of his brother to the stables, 'truly Irish carelessness'—a 'little kid of nine,' riding as he pleased about the country, until through the success of a horse named *Master George*, Master George was snatched from the horses and sent to school."

Of *Hail and Farewell*, the first volume of which appeared in 1911, Mr Freeman says one of George Moore's distinctions is to have "modified an old form so as virtually to turn it into a new one in his autobiographic writings; making grave things light, using mockery and malice for those intellectual revenges which the very kindest of us condone." He regrets "a dozen wanton pages" in *Vale*. "If it be urged," he says, "that you must take an author as he is, the answer is simple: Moore as he essentially is does not raise this offence. It comes from a spirit which he oddly fancies to be a spirit of moral and intellectual liberty. Such episodes signify a brief maddening failure of the artistic." Referring to Mr Moore's "subtle constructive surgery," he says, "It has been Moore's fortune and ours, that sitting opposite his friends, he has not simply torn them to pieces, but also put them together again—making them different perhaps, but making them whole." One especially admires the condensed: "romantic biography as well as romantic autobiography, and when all is said, it remains equally admirable and inexcusable."

Although verse rhythms and cadences are analysed to-day with great particularity, prose rhythms are no less important. One is influenced and somewhat overawed by Mr Freeman's analytic know-



ledge of the values and harmonies of Mr Moore's prose. The adjective "staccato" is used in objection, whereas one not a classicist would say the staccato sentence is permissible as expressing spontaneously positive sentiment; and although one perceives Mr Moore's evolution and feels that his later work is "characterized by a new cunning," of the so-called "unfortunate" early work, one would say merely that the early lacks the subtlety and elegance of the later. As Mr Freeman says, Mr Moore's art is "a thing of clarification and effusion" like "a Corot landscape": "The movement of the prose, the undulations never wandering past control, the unheigh-tened and unlapsing phrasing, the colour and the quietness, the simplicity, the depth, the brightness—all these, the mere names of qualities, as trees are mere names of mysteries, are the artist's rendering in his proper medium of that which his youth has breathed, and which was in his veins before consciousness awoke." Any writer of strong personality is a stylist, the style varying from the stereotyped in rhetoric and sentiment as the personality varies. Moreover, as Mr Moore himself says, "the impersonality of the artist is the vainest of delusions" and in this portrait it would seem that George Moore the man of letters and George Moore the man, are identical. In the artist as in the man, we have the same "intricate simplicity," the same incapacity for indifference, the adhering to prejudice, the same *hauteur* and subservience; for as Mr Freeman says, "His temptation has not been to court the world but to shock it, a subservience as illseeming as any compliance"; he has indeed "redeemed portraiture from gentleness and made butchery a pleasure"—the same individual who "would not care to leave Max on 'Servants' lying about in his house, for fear that if a servant read in it she might think it superior and inconsiderate." "Too much absorbed in observing and remembering life, to be interested in moral ideas," he is yet according to Mr Freeman, interested in religion—"in the personal aspect of it"; exercising sobriety and moderation, yet with unreserve of judgement, revealing "thoughts which most of us rebuke into snake-like stillness," he "is equally isolated by his virtues and his faults."

One feels with Mr Freeman very heartily that Avowals is Mr Moore's Odyssey. Defining these "serenely nimble conversations" as "a kind of acute innocent thinking aloud," he perceives "an ease, a vivacity, a brilliance and a simplicity" in them; stressing

this charm above the weight of the critical opinions expressed. Certain it is that the imaginative inventive realism of the conversations, the drawing-room quality, native grace, and candid speculation take precedence in one's mind, of other merits, the paraphrase of Defoe having the qualities of Defoe himself—preciseness without apparent effort to be precise, the effect of discursiveness unrehearsed—the holding power of prose reduced to its lowest terms. "Robinson Crusoe, the most English of all books," says Mr Moore: "We are islanders, Crusoe was one. Our business is the sea. Crusoe was constantly occupied going to and fro from a wreck. We are a prosaic people, what the French would call *terre à terre*. Nobody was more *terre à terre* than Crusoe." One finds an enigma in Mr Moore's indifference—professed indifference perhaps one should say—to Henry James. The word envy as applied to James's attitude to *A Modern Lover* seems fantastic; as for his "unresponsiveness to the imagination of others," suggested by Mr Freeman in this connexion, one is bewildered when one remembers James in his letters struggling to catch the reflection of his correspondents' thought in every query. On the other hand, there is the justness of Mr Moore's admiration for Hawthorne, the apt characterization of Zola's mind as "a coarse net through which living things escape," and the aesthetic soundness of his prejudice against Tolstoi in his assertion that "Tolstoi writes with a mind as clear as an electric lamp, a sizzling white light, crude and disagreeable." Mr Moore succeeds in seeming "unaware of conventional appreciations"; undependable as a critic—inspired as an appreciator of those writers with whom he is in sympathy.

With regard to Héloïse and Abélard, named as one of Mr Moore's supreme achievements, we are less tempted to speak in the superlative than in the instance of Avowals—dependable and absorbing as all of Mr Freeman's comments are. We feel perspicacity in the contrast between Pater's interpretation of Abélard and Mr Moore's: "true child of light"—Pater's phrase; "those sins, that thwarted passion, that pride, that madness of mind and body—the features of Moore's portrait," and we relish Mr Freeman's ingenious assertion that while "it would be untrue to say that George Moore has given you the Abélard of the letters, it is true that he has given you something at least of the Abélard whose passions were abjured and lamented by the Abélard of the letters"; most

adroit, his answer to the criticism that the book is monotonous, "if that term be meant as equivalent to monotoned, it can be admitted." He laments that an early proclivity has smirched the book as it smirched Hail and Farewell, but pronounces it none the less, "the work of a mature unaging mind, the prose masterpiece perhaps of our time." Of *Astrolabe*, Mr Freeman says it is strange "that the writer who has so often been dismissed as affected should almost alone have created the natural and beloved child." "Natural" and obviously beloved, is he lovely? He justifies the description of him by Mr Moore in the question, "Why should nature have given him such witty eyes?" His resentful grief, however, at the death of the musician is scarcely that of a child; and captivating and diverting though he is, when one recalls his relentless investigating activity, his conflicting ambitions, the snare for the ducks, the wish to be a gleeman, his determination to go on a crusade, and his superiority at the age of eleven or less, to his mother's society and that of her companions—the only society he had known—one feels that to have such a child in tow would deprive one of reason.

Not so much a composite as a gallery of aspects from childhood to maturity, Mr Freeman's portrait is surprisingly augmented by the addendum of Mr Henry Danielson's bibliography of Mr Moore's works. The connoisseur here sees in the notes appended, the price approximated at which volumes may be obtained and exults or is abased accordingly.

Exemplifying his own ideal of portraiture, Mr Freeman has set forth "the character, the spirit, the inward history" that Mr Moore's work "has expressed or suggested," giving a portrait so faithful that a detractor could not say that he has suppressed blemishes or idealized his subject; moreover in refusing to minimize an unbeautiful feature, he has not immortalized it. He is at every point his own man and Mr Moore's deepest admirer could not wish a more glowing likeness or a finer light.

MARIANNE MOORE

## BALKAN BALLOONS

THE BALKAN PENINSULA. *By Ferdinand Schevill.*

8vo. 559 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$4.

A LONG felt want has been met at last, met at its timeliest, and with a completeness that is satisfying. "This book," Dr Schevill says at the outset, "plans not to formulate the Balkan problems theoretically, but to exhibit them in their historical development." There are three thousand years to consider in setting forth that development, during the last third of which, Balkania has been setting revolutionary pots on the fire, pots which presently boiled over and were found to be too heavy to be lifted off by any one, or any three countries.

Tracing the course of empires through the stormy peninsula, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman, Dr Schevill has found himself obliged to deal with every great European struggle that has ever taken place. To begin fairly late, there were the Crusades, the strife Venice and Genoa hung on a holy pretext in the fifteenth century, the wars of Sultan Ahmed against Poland and Austria in the seventeenth, the resultant feud with Catherine of Russia in the eighteenth—Catherine who resented other than her own oppression of her "doormat to Europe." Then came the Napoleonic wars when Egypt was wrested from Balkan control, and, for climax, the World War which toppled over on Europe when a Serbian killed an Austrian archduke. The Balkans have been playing with matches all their lives, and yet doing it between spells of lethargy in which they have betrayed only a heavy-lidded indifference to their flaming consequences. They seem not so much warlike as provocative of war, and the explanation of them as world factors constitutes one of the most intricate problems of Dr Schevill's treatise.

It is a scholarly work, brilliantly written. It gives plenty of space to the examination of causes, as well as to the pageantry of events themselves, and to a study of the involved mental make-up of the composites evolved by imperfect fusion with many conquerors. The Balkan states still "live side by side in disunion" as the emperor Maurice said of them more than a thousand years ago. Dr Schevill

has traced the disunions down to the present, patiently illuminating the racial psychoses of small nations, each of which can remember some old war in which others of the group were on the wrong side. The history of Greece is especially interesting to review at present, and here Dr Schevill has done a particularly fine piece of work. Since his book went to press, the Greeks have been adding another chapter to their national annals—but Dr Schevill predicted the chapter, and has explained carefully what claims to Thrace and the Smyrna salient each side can validly present.

Back of this by a few years, and a few chapters, is the still more absorbing story of the Balkan beginning of the World War. The "balance of Europe" becomes a live phrase to an American reader. This is the first book to stress the murder of the heir to the Austrian throne by Serbian conspiracy as a strongly determining cause of war. The road leading up to the assassination and on from it has been cleared to show distinctly the consequences of that momentous crime. Again a Balkan-brewed pot boiling over has scalded all Europe, not to mention reducing the Balkans themselves to an irritated remnant of their old, disunited, spasmodic strength.

In his interpretation of modern events Dr Schevill is likely to provoke discussion. He finds it impossible to remain above the clouds. He is frankly pessimistic over the basis of the Paris treaties and the results likely to accrue to the Balkans therefrom. It is, perhaps, with this in mind that he ends with the divided view that man is unlikely to "summon the wisdom necessary to restrain his passions," but that there is some hope, even for the Balkans, in concerted idealism, some prospect of justice through a—not *the*—league of nations.

But there can be no successful summary of this book. Without the author's lightness of touch, his human handling of epic events, his flexible vocabulary, and the humorous relief of his satire and his most enlightening figures of speech, the five hundred and fifty-nine pages would be of too great and complicated content for any but the professional historian who had already gleaned half its facts from a dozen books. As it is, this history will undoubtedly be read. It will add to the prestige Dr Schevill has already attained by his *Political History of Modern Europe*.

HELEN IVES GILCHRIST

## THE CRITIC OF DOSTOEVSKY

STILL LIFE. By J. Middleton Murry. 12mo. 464 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.50.

THE THINGS WE ARE. By J. Middleton Murry. 12mo. 320 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.50.

IN *Still Life* Mr Murry gives us: an English, critic's, version in novel form, of England's own particularly highly sophisticated type of post-war, out-of-nowhere-into-nothingness, the book ending with one lost hysterical soul weeping in perfect iambs. In *The Things We Are* Mr Murry seems to have undergone an idyllic reaction against his own previous effort, and in expiation steers a mysteriously awakened Mr Boston into a wife, and the company of wholesome, big-bosomed Mrs Williams. And to our astonishment and shamefaced confusion, just when the lovers have been united, this very Mrs Williams comes into the room and places a steaming pudding on the table. Which makes one feel that if we are to preserve Mr Murry as a Platonist we must maintain the balance between dualities by throwing one of his novels on each side of the scale, and letting the bitterness of the one counterbalance the sweetness of the other.

As a portrait of English society, I am willing to take Mr Murry as gospel. The sterile self-analyses in *Still Life*, the futile conversations, the almost vulgar self-consciousness: it has always been my fond belief that contemporary drawing-room England is precisely that. Yet, building upon this fundament, Mr Murry has contrived to wind up a story with a positively astonishing skill. For the first seven or eight chapters we follow him as he takes on one responsibility after another; but unfortunately, once Mr Murry has finished winding up his story, there is nothing to do but let it run down. Before the story is finished every last one of the characters has told us far too much about himself; and for the last hundred pages they are nothing but voices. Still, these statements are unfair; as they make no allowance for the really keen strokes which Mr Murry keeps turning up continually, and for the discretion and freshness with which the old triangle theme is handled.



But *The Things We Are*, as I have said, starts out very plainly to supply the antidote to *Still Life*. Mr Boston, far from deluging us with self-analyses, is an unusually rigid and silenced man, a man in whom all impressions lie buried and unuttered. Then suddenly, about half-way through the book, Mr Boston begins to unbend; he acquires a virulent attack of normality, goes out among good wholesome people, picks up a couple of buns, falls in love with a girl, and analyses himself as expertly as though he had been at it all his life, or as though he had been carried over bodily from Mr Murry's earlier novel. Thus, there are simply two Mr Bostons: one is made to feel the potentialities of this first Boston, and to see the second Boston kinetically, but one does not feel that the potential energy of the first Boston is the kinetic energy of the second. The accepted methods of effecting a character's rejuvenation are (a) to have him meet a Salvation Army lass, or (b) to have him awakened by the war. Mr Murry's invention of simply having the character rejuvenated is more cautious, perhaps, but no more contenting.

On taking up these books of Mr Murry's one automatically returns to the question of Dostoevsky. Mr Murry, to be sure, has done a remarkably thorough job at making the Russian less uncouth and reducing his frenzy to the proportions proper to an English drawing-room; but the principle underlying both authors is the same. It calls, I think, for a distinction between the psychology of form and the psychology of subject-matter. Or between the psychologism of Dostoevsky and the psychologism of, say, a Greek vase. By the psychology of subject-matter I mean, I believe, what Mrs Padraic Colum has defined as information, or science. She might as well have called it journalism. Journalism, science, biographical gossip . . . this movement of almost pure information has had a tremendous effect on modern aesthetics. Thanks to it, far too much emphasis is laid upon the documentary value of the work of art, upon art as a revelational function. We find both Mr Matthew Josephson and Mr Burton Rascoe, for instance, objecting to Joyce because there are more psychoanalytic facts to be obtained from the reading of *Kraft-Ebbing* or *Freud* than from *Ulysses*. And I trust soon to hear these Messrs objecting to Cézanne because his paintings do not contain nearly so much data on trees as can be found in a bulletin of the Forestry Department.



The point is that the problem of the artist lies elsewhere, and that the novel after Dostoevsky has given too much attention to the document. The document *per se*, being neither beautiful nor un-beautiful, falls into quite another plane of considerations from purely aesthetic ones. And if Dostoevsky must stand for his revelations of the human soul, then he stands as nothing other than a scientist who was improperly trained in scientific methods of presentation, and who gave us consequently a hodgepodge rather than a schematization. One might have thought that the peculiarly vigorous flourishing of science would have served rather to purge literature of any documentary obligations, just as the perfection of photography has brought about a similar release in painting. But instead, literature was swept into a sympathetic movement, and science became a burden rather than an instrument of liberation.

Perhaps, to define unescapably just how I should distinguish between the psychology of form and the psychology of subject-matter, I should pin myself to a specific illustration. We read, then, in *The Things We Are*:

" . . . Bettington felt sad. It seemed to him that at the moment when he knew his friend, his friend was embarking on a great journey with him, a journey more dangerous perhaps, but far more wonderful than his own. It was too much. To have to say two farewells at the same moment was more than he could bear, more than he ought to bear; and besides, there was a strange envy in his heart. He must confess it.

" 'I envy you . . . old man. I can't help it; I try not to.'

" 'I wonder you don't hate me as well.'

" 'No, I don't hate you . . . I don't think I do. Why should I? I don't feeling you're taking Felicia away from me. The more I think about her, the more I know she wasn't mine. But envy, yes. I'm afraid it goes pretty deep, too.' After a minute he added,"  
et cetera.

Perhaps the author has established whether it is hate or envy. But I take liberty to assure the reader that he will not care. The information is there; but the issue hardly seems a contribution to beauty. Of course, I do not deny that even this sort of information

could have been made beautiful, especially if—in the truest sense—it had been made more intense. But it would have been the intensity, and not the fact, which was beautiful. The accurate definition of an idea is beautiful—as in Spinoza. The accurate solution of a problem is beautiful—which doubtless explains why Euclid was included among the humanities. And which obviously suggests defining beauty as the shortest distance between two points. But there is also the functional side to beauty, and fortunately Mr Murry has given a very fine instance of it, which I quote from *Still Life* to illustrate the psychology of form:

"Above them Anne began to sing, low enough to be singing to herself. She could hear that they were not talking, and she crooned. But the house was so still, beneath the regular beat of the rain between the gusts, that they could hear her when her voice rose above a low humming. Neither knew what she was singing.

" 'Does Anne often sing like that?' said Dennis, almost whispering.

" 'How do you mean, "like that"?' Maurice [Anne's lover] hardly understood the question. Then something familiar in the sound came vaguely into his memory. 'I don't know. Yes, she does sometimes. But not often. . . . At least, I don't think so. . . . I don't know.' "

It is, quite plainly, the functional value which counts here. Mr Murry has given us a mechanism of beauty. A programme is officially announced; a blare of trumpets has been sounded. Similarly in *Macbeth* when the porter scene follows the murder scene this is no documentary *coup*, but a purely functional one. Writing in the Dostoevsky tradition, however, one underrates this really primary quality of art, and—in Mr Murry's case, at least—attains it too seldom.

The making of this lengthy distinction, I feel, is justified in that it attempts to get at the exact quality of diffuseness which makes Mr Murry's books a bit dissatisfying.

KENNETH BURKE

## FOUR AND TWENTY BLACKBIRDS

FOUR AND TWENTY MINDS. *By Giovanni Papini.*  
*Selected and translated by Ernest Hatch Wilkins.*  
12mo. 324 pages. Thomas Y. Crowell Company.  
\$2.50.

HAVING swaggered in and out of a whole streetful of philosophies, brawled with d'Annunzio, assaulted Senator Croce, composed a titanic biography of Christ, and finally burnt himself out in a meteoric fall into the Church of Rome; Italy's popular young iconoclast with this collection of essays now makes his first bow to an American audience: (hats off gents to) Signor Giovanni Papini!<sup>1</sup>

His critical method is as old as puritanism. It consists in peering at art through moral binoculars, and in lifting the bars of Lodge 69 of the Ancient Order of Olympians only to those lucky poets, philosophers, or even fictitious personages who come up to the Papini entrance requirements of Moral Beauty. Thus Nietzsche because, even "if you will not respect his philosophy . . . you must at least respect the soul of him who thought and wrote it," finds himself unanimously elected; while Hamlet, whose "killing of Ophelia is the most useless and the most monstrous of all the cruelties," finds himself unanimously blackballed.

This moral attitude towards literature lowers criticism to its most vulgar and vicarious form. It becomes no more valuable than the judgement of an unimaginative nurse-girl, to whom a work of literature is beautiful only in so far as the hero of it symbolizes those qualities of moral splendour which she admires in her policeman. It is an attitude which refuses to accept a work of art as a complete and self-sufficient organism, but attempts to judge its beauty by those values which art in its creation merely utilizes as subject-matter. It judges Polonius by the truth of his paternal advice, rather than by the aesthetic importance of that device in the artistic creation of his personality.

<sup>1</sup> Another view of this author, following his work to the Life of Christ (a translation of which is announced) will appear shortly in THE DIAL.—The Editors.

But not only does Signor Papini utilize biographic data, he even creates it. For like a spoilt child he is unwilling to limit himself to a technique, but continually allows his emotions to over-reach it and express themselves in rank and disordered growth. Thus do we find him so overcome by Hamlet's moral turpitude as to compose a lovely speech, assuring us that in the mouth of Hamlet it would have deterred Ophelia from her watery climax.

Though this sort of creative-criticism-with-a-vengeance is merely vulgar when applied to art, it is something more when it is applied to philosophy. For with philosophic criticism the technique is everything, a *sine qua non*. But even here Papini's sly little ego creeps out to wilfully twist and tear.

Space allows me to mention only one example of this critical perversion, and I quote the following sentence from the attack on Croce. It is a sentence in which Papini, in an attempt to prove that Croce writes sheer nonsense, paraphrases and quotes direct a passage from Croce's *Breviario*.

"Foscolo, after the writing of a certain famous ode, is 'a poet who has utterly achieved his task, and is therefore no longer a poet.' "

The meaning of this passage is clear enough in Croce, however, and has been correctly translated by Ainslie as follows; "Foscolo the poet, having achieved his task and therefore being no longer poet, now wishes to know his real condition." But not only Papini has wilfully perverted the meaning of this sentence, his translator Mr Wilkins seems to consider it wiser in this case to follow his note that "the passages of Croce's Italian text quoted by Papini are replaced by the corresponding passages of Ainslie's translation," Mr Wilkins seems to consider it wiser in this case to follow his master's footsteps rather than his own foot-notes.

So does the volume run on to its last chapter, where Papini having placed the other twenty-three ingredients into his pie, with a final autobiographic essay crawls in himself and pulls the crust over. And so far as English translations are concerned let us hope he stays there.

SLATER BROWN

## WHAT IS MORALITY?

A STUDY IN MORAL PROBLEMS. By B. M. Laing.  
*George Allen and Unwin. London. 10/6.*

THE impression made by this book is that Professor Laing must have had originally a very definitely academic outlook upon human problems, but that contact with real life—in the war and in Yorkshire industrialism—has been gradually directing his attention towards new sets of facts which university tradition ignores. There is room for the process to go further, and to lead to a less traditional statement of the problems confronting modern moralists than that with which Professor Laing begins:

“Throughout the following chapters there runs one central problem, and upon it all the arguments converge. It is the problem of the relation between human action and natural law. It is an old one, and one that has been dealt with by eminent thinkers: Kant and Lotze are but two. On account of the development of science with its insistence upon the reign of universal law, it has become in modern times a very important problem, because of its bearing upon moral and social effort. The freedom that is somehow implied in morality has to be reconciled with the rigidity and uniformity that characterize natural law. That problem must be and is here regarded as a fundamental one, because it lies at the basis of all the more specific moral problems like evil, social conflicts, conflicts of values, the instability and uncertainty of moral progress and moral achievement.”

There is, however, a question prior to those raised in this passage, and it is one which Professor Laing recognizes, but does not sufficiently discuss. It is the question: Is there, in any objective sense, such a thing as morality or immorality? Or is the conception of morality merely part of the police force by which dominant groups seek to enforce their authority? The combination of psychoanalysis with Marxian political theory has forced this question insistently upon many people. Psychoanalysis shows that the basis of a passion is by no means always, or even usually, what the patient thinks it is;

and Marx suggests that all morality is derived from class-interest. This latter view, in its strict economic form, is undoubtedly too narrow; but when we include other groups, national, religious, et cetera, it becomes far more plausible. Without committing ourselves to this opinion, let us see what could be said for it by an advocate.

In the first place (he would say) if you wish to understand the nature of the moral sentiments, you should study the occasions on which they are most strongly aroused. At the outbreak of the war, there was an extraordinary wave of moral sentiment in all the belligerent countries; we felt a moral horror of the Germans because of their invasion of Belgium, and they felt an exactly equal moral horror of us because of the blockade—at any rate those were the reasons assigned. The Times feels moral horror of the Bolsheviks whenever it is proposed that something should be done to diminish the misery in Russia. Anarchists feel moral horror of the tyrants whom they assassinate. Judges are full of moral fervour when they condemn men to be flogged. The Charity Organization Society is full of moral condemnation of the undeserving poor, and socialists who advocate confiscation are full of moral condemnation of the undeserving rich.

From these facts, our moral *advocatus diaboli* draws the conclusion that morality is a device for inhibiting our natural sympathies on occasions when we wish to inflict pain, whether from motives of self-preservation, ambition, or sheer cruelty. He will say that sympathy conflicts with egoism, and that morality enables us to *camouflage* the victory of egoism as really a higher form of sympathy. He will point out that the conception of sin is anterior, historically and anthropologically, to the conception of virtue, and that to this day the occasions when we feel most moral are the occasions when we are administering punishment. He will go on to say that, if the moralists really desired a happier world, as they say they do, they would work for the abolition of morality, since, if it were extinct, sympathy would have free play, and men would not torture each other so much as they do. But he will not press this *argumentum ad hominem*, since his position debars him from the tempting conclusion that all moralists are immoral, and that he is moral when he inflicts pain upon them.

There are, of course, answers to this position, whether valid or invalid. But although Professor Laing's first chapter is headed



Grounds for Scepticism in Moral Theory and Practice, we do not find in his pages any argument capable of refuting a moral sceptic. Within its limitations, however, the book has many merits. Against the views which it rejects it gives, as a rule, good grounds; and the views which it advocates are, on almost all points, enlightened and rational. It rejects the view that morality consists mainly of sacrifice:

"Morality has been interpreted as if it were a moloch, as if the moral life for ever demanded sacrifices from human beings and the sacrifice of some values for others. Morality has hitherto had this character, but ethical theory has never questioned whether it need have this character. . . . The result has been that ethics has done little more than endeavour to give a reasoned justification of what the average person's moral beliefs and aspirations are; and in doing so it has accepted all the unquestioned assumptions of the ordinary moral consciousness. Its attitude is analogous to what the attitude of natural science would be if the latter accepted all the popular beliefs regarding natural phenomena, and tried merely to make them systematic."

This is well said. Again, in discussing the theory that the rivalry of States is due to over-population, he says:

"The struggle over primary ends between States is due not to the lack of the means of subsistence in these States, but to the need of finding fresh populations to absorb these means of subsistence; and unless fresh markets and fresh consumers are found, the respective States will suffer internally. A mere restriction of population will thus only serve to reduce the numbers of consumers."

It would be easy to criticize this view, which hardly gives the whole truth. At the same time, it is to be observed that Germany had no population problem in the years before the war (the former emigration had ceased); that France has none now; and that China, where the problem is worst, is the least militaristic of great nations. The population problem is used as an excuse for militarism, but is not a *vera causa*.

BERTRAND RUSSELL



## BRIEFER MENTION

**NIGGER**, by Clement Wood (12mo, 232 pages; Dutton: \$2) has for its subject the futile struggle of the Southern negro for emancipation. Absorbed in the story, the reader hardly notices how it is told. And Mr Wood aids this concentration—this forgetfulness—by never intruding with rhetoric, propaganda, or bitterness, and by using his gift of very individualized expression only in a few phrases that illuminate his theme in reflecting his poet's perception of it. He has allowed his subject to use him as a medium, instead of overshadowing it by his personality. It is difficult to say why this book falls short of greatness: perhaps because it treats an epic subject too sketchily. But it is a tale so engrossing that the reader becomes a passionate participant; and it stays in his mind with ever-increasing vividness, compelling thought, and taking on the aspect of life he has known.

**OF THE COLLECTED NOVELS AND STORIES OF GUY DE MAUPASSANT**, translated and edited by Ernest Boyd (Knopf: \$2 a volume) two volumes have already been issued: *Boule de Suif* (12mo, 248 pages) and *Mademoiselle Fifi* (12mo, 262 pages) each with "other stories." The stories are presented in their chronological order; intelligence has at last been brought to bear on the matters of titling, accurate and frank translation, restoration of forgotten or suppressed stories, the incorporation of posthumous works. The format is exceptionally agreeable, the type, binding, paper, covers, all conspire to make the definitive edition a pleasure to every sense. The material for a proper revaluation of de Maupassant is therefore in hand; the material likewise for the definite pleasures one already knows to exist. From the same publisher, by the same translator, and similar in physical aspect comes also *GERMINIE LACERTEUX*, by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt (8vo, 329 pages; \$3). The name of the brothers has not had the same enduring prominence as that of Zola or of de Maupassant; the translation, at a time when the art of the novel is again in discussion, is peculiarly fortunate.

**MILLIONS**, by Ernest Poole (12mo, 279 pages; Macmillan: \$1.75) embodies a story which stands out like a circus three-sheet in a churchyard, but its merits as a novel are not to that extent conspicuous. Mr Poole seemingly allowed himself to become so absorbed in underlining his theme that he neglected to make his people quite credible; he has plastered his ideas about so freely that they have lost the power of self-fulfilment, and consequently display a dwindling vitality. As a narrative, it is swiftly projected and shrewdly edged with satire, but a greater degree of artistic restraint would have moved it several notches higher in the scale of excellence.

**BENNETT MALIN**, by Elsie Singmaster (12mo, 328 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$2) testifies to a clear advance in its author's competence. The narrative reflects life intimately and with a first-hand directness which is at once challenging and illuminating. As a character study, it has substance and back-ground; as an accomplishment it is sure-footed and sincere.

**THE CAMOMILE**, by Catherine Carswell (12mo, 319 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$1.90) is a story of maidenly revolt, which doesn't exactly send one into transports of enthusiasm, particularly since the revolt is only a milk-and-water affair at best. The camomile—"the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows"—survives the rubber heel of oppression almost too well, expending itself in schoolgirl rapture. The novel is a series of letters which one would enjoy if one knew their author, and might even read to one's friends—if other means of entertainment were lacking.

**WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS**, by John Hastings Turner (12mo, 313 pages; Scribner: \$1.75) presents, in second-hand garments of "realism," a ludicrous, improbable, and entirely undesirable romantic conception: a Madonna-woman who returns to two middle-aged husbands the ecstatic passion they once felt for their brides. Middle age is rarely thought worth writing about; and it is a pity that a book like this should be circulated and give an added impression of dulness to an interesting subject.

**THE PROMISED ISLE**, by Laurids Bruun (12mo, 243 pages; Knopf: \$2) is social criticism of socialism, carried on under the picturesque guise of South Sea romance. It seeks to recapture the adroit ironic flavour of Van Zanten's *Happy Days*, an earlier translation from the same source, but its success is only approximate. Characters called Jakob Beer and Daniel Hooch may be good vaudeville, but they become flat the moment they are uncorked. In the classic phrase of the Old Soak, satire such as this "don't gurgel none when you pour it out of the bottle."

**SEA WRACK**, by Vere Hutchinson (12mo, 300 pages; Century: \$1.75). If winter comes can spring be far behind? Not with our scribblers, certainly. Here is a book fresh from England bearing all the earmarks of the work by that other Hutchinson of best-seller glory: the same breathless, jerky style, the same asthmatic dialogue, the same knack for discountenancing the inevitable, the same truth-dodging talent. What might have been a genuinely tragic tale is sidetracked into the baldest melodrama.

**TUTORS' LANE**, by Wilmarth Lewis (12mo, 164 pages; Knopf: \$1.75) is a delightful sketch of love and manners in a small college town. It is a first book—and how pleasant to find a young author who does not have to write about himself! *Tutors' Lane* is shrewd, kindly, and amusing. That light touch, the absence of which among Americans is so frequently deplored by our continentalized compatriots, seems born in Wilmarth Lewis.

**THE CONFESSIONS OF A WELL-MEANING WOMAN**, by Stephen McKenna (12mo, 288 pages; Doran: \$2) is keyed in a mood deftly satirical, with ample insight and urbanity of temper. Thus, though its psychology is keen and uncompromising, enough detachment has gone into the writing to relieve the narrative of any tincture of the unchivalrous sneer. Given the materials, it would be impossible for a craftsman of Mr McKenna's talents not to have evolved the kind of novel he did; he has not stopped there, however, and the result is an added measure of excellence.

**DOWN THE RIVER**, by Roscoe W. Brink (12mo, 171 pages; Holt: \$1.90) is a novel in free verse that deserves consideration only because of its form. It is a pity that Mr Brink is not a more gifted novelist, that he is so mediocre a writer of verse, for his experiment is in itself interesting. His accomplishment is negligible, but he has pointed to an ideal medium of expression for our contemporary novelists who think in "significant flashes," who rigorously sand-blast the soft spots from their narratives. The present story comes to us from the mouth of Belle, the uneducated, usually ungrammatical woman who—telling the story of herself, her husband, and their children—speaks for innumerable drudging wives and mothers. Mr Brink would have us believe that Belle, following the advice of Sydney, looked into her heart and wrote. We can believe that she may have found there such a maternal image as that of the sky "crooning over the city"; but we cannot credit her ever stumbling on such verbal felicities as "lonely and cloistered in the weaving rain" or "Fate brooding like a prodigal giant." Mr Brink might have written poetry in his own person, or he might have written poetry in Belle's natural language; but he chose to make her speak with the words of Weaver and of Fletcher, and he has paid heavily.

**AN INSTRUMENT OF THE GODS**, by Lincoln Colcord (12mo, 321 pages; Macmillan: \$2) is a group of sea stories that are not quite bad enough to be ignored nor quite good enough to be damned. As popular tales of the bounding main, chiefly in the vicinity of China, the adventures which Mr Colcord relates, however, unquestionably deserve a hearing in the market-places for which they are perhaps deliberately intended. The characterizations are rubber-stamped, but there are frequent dashes of spume and spray which could have been photographed only by a sailor. A number of chancies are thrown in for good measure.

**LOVE AND FREINDSHIP**, by Jane Austen (12mo, 174 pages; Stokes: \$2) is, according to Mr Chesterton, who writes the preface, "really a rattling burlesque" and "something intrinsically important to literature and literary history." It is not likely that the editor overstates the case. Foreshadowings of great work are often tedious; in this case they are bright and airy; the gentle irony of *Pride And Prejudice* flourished early—it is only remarkable that it was never corrupted. A special word can be said for the sixteen-page history of England, maliciously written to prove the innocence of Mary Queen of Scots.

**ESCAPE**, by Jeffery E. Jeffery (12mo, 325 pages; Seltzer: \$2) is deceptive both in its title, which indicates the theme of the book, and in manner. The first thirty pages promise well; but gradually it becomes evident that the easy reading offered is due simply to the absence of any turn of phrase one might care to pause over; and the pleasurable reticence of the narrative loses itself in repetitions. The subject-matter, which implies struggle ending in either victory or defeat, is irritatingly bungled. The heroine's efforts end in compromise: an outcome true to life, certainly, but one which, to be effective in a novel, must appear inevitable. In this instance it seems the least logical of all possible solutions. The book is a failure because the author, having chanced upon an idea, never troubled to think it out.

IN EIGHTH NOTES, by H. T. Parker (12mo, 238 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2) the distinguished critic of music and the theatre has collected, from the columns of The Boston Evening Transcript, eight groups of brief essays, characterizations and estimates of men and women in the musical world. With Mr Parker the analysis of qualities is so subtle, and the taste so unerring, that one does not require him to pass judgement, to say "good" or "better." To render justice to seven conductors and at the same time to indicate their peculiar qualities; to do as much for a handful of pianists, singers, violinists; never to be betrayed into accepting appearance for reality; always to be able to express justly and precisely the hidden nature of the complex personalities with which he deals—all these things are within Mr Parker's capacities, and they place him almost alone in American journalistic criticism. The essays are each of two or three pages, little triumphs of compression; they show no signs of the daily rush; and except for one or two stylistic peculiarities they are written with as fine a sensibility as they are conceived. Sensibility, it may be said, when it is added to taste, perception, and dignity, is a priceless quality in criticism. One looks for a companion to this book, so certain, so right, on the men and women of the theatre; they, and Mr Parker's fellow-workers, stand equally in need of it.

WHAT I SAW IN AMERICA, by G. K. Chesterton (8vo, 297 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$3) is in parts as good as the same author's magnificent history of England, and that book was almost all as good as his writings on Dickens. Which means that while his prejudices seem to keep Mr Chesterton alive, he lives to keep alive his great good sense. The book is a critical estimate of England, America, and G. K. Chesterton, some of whose later hobbies bob up distressingly, but not to spoil the whole effect.

THE LETTERS OF HORACE HOWARD FURNESS, edited by Horace Furness Jayne (2 vols., illus., 12mo, 647 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$8). In these letters the distinguished Shakespearean scholar, master of that tremendous editorial task, the New Variorum, is merged in the ardent, rich-natured father and friend, intensely alive, terribly tender-hearted, with a quick unquenchable humour that is for ever sparkling out and tipping the edge of his remarks with silver. It is not surprising that so lambent a spirit could have fused and transfused the dry bones of old commentaries with new and living sap. After reading these letters one not only turns with an involuntary rekindling to his Shakespeare, but one is aware of that expansion of being that comes from intercourse with a fine ripe, *fizzing* personality, an irradiant intellect to which every moment of living is good grist. His grandson, Horace Furness Jayne, has edited the letters most ably and delicately.

JOHN BURROUGHS TALKS, by Clifton Johnson (illus., 12mo, 353 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$4) stands as an excellent example of the tendency to weave into book-form the insignificant details of the life of a man whose real work is significant. The volume is an undistinguished, gossipy one; it provides one with complete information as to what Burroughs ate for breakfast and as to what sort of a pipe he smoked (if, indeed, he smoked a pipe at all); but it shows little if anything of the inner life of the man and casts no new light upon his theories or philosophy.

**MEMORIES OF A HOSTESS**, by M. A. DeWolfe Howe (illus., 12mo, 312 pages; Atlantic Monthly Press: \$4) and **GLIMPSES OF AUTHORS**, by Caroline Ticknor (illus., 8vo, 335 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3.50). The savour of New England's golden age in literature may be generously sampled in these two volumes of reminiscence—may be quite rolled beneath the tongue, in fact. One discovers it a pleasant, mild, slightly musty taste, compounded of serious thinking and what Emerson once characterized as "nimble pieces of benevolence and etiquette." So far as Miss Ticknor's book is concerned, the title quite accurately supplies the label, for the contacts are rarely close; celebrities occupy a middle distance between intimacy and hearsay. The more important volume, drawn chiefly from the diaries of Mrs James T. Fields, contains many relishable details and should have a secure niche in the archives. It is a vivid picture of Boston in the days before the hub of the universe so much as dreamed of twentieth century demountable rim competition.

**KID KARTOONS**, by Gene Carr (4to, unnumbered; Century: \$1.75) is a collection of one hundred drawings selected by the artist from his cartoons appearing each day on the back page of the New York World, wherein he depicts the manifold vagaries that fill the lives of our own cosmopolitan gutter-snipes. It is a pity that Mr Carr has no gift of dynamic suggestion. His keen insight into the thoughts and emotions of these little ragamuffins, his love for their brave humanity in the face of their cruelly drab environment, his unflinching freedom from sentimentality and the cheaply pathetic are really considerable talents. But his limitation makes for a curious stillness in his characters, a lack of vital energy where energy is so evidently "indicated." Were it not for this, Mr Carr could well ask for another Dickens to embellish his collection of drawings.

**SPANISH FOLK SONGS**, translated by Salvador de Madariaga (16mo, 58 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$1) are unique in flavour and of some poetic moment. They are, as their translator says, disinterested, aiming at nothing. They "fall like ripe fruit from the tree of experience." The songs are slight, built on assonance, some of them almost nil, but more often they bring with them a picture of their habitat and a scene from some universal drama on a small scale.

**WORLD HISTORY, 1815-1920**, by Eduard Fueter, translated by Sidney Bradshaw Fay (8vo, 490 pages, Harcourt, Brace: \$3.75). As a trained historian and a Swiss, Dr Fueter was doubly equipped to write "a survey of the history of the last hundred years from a really universal point of view." He has divided his book into five sections, dealing with the point of departure from earlier systems, the rise and fall of the international alliance against revolutionary tendencies, the old and new colonial policies, the struggle against the fourth estate, and with it the formation of new national states in Europe, and, lastly, economic imperialism. The book is a narrative of consequences into which Dr Fueter has still managed to bring vivid details of movements and their guiding personalities. It is a study of the growth of group ideas illustrated by the conduct of the nations of Europe since 1815.



## COMMENT

THE editors have the pleasure of announcing that for the year 1922 THE DIAL's award goes to Mr T. S. Eliot.

MR ELIOT has himself done so much to make clear the relation of critic to creative artist that we hope not to be asked whether it is his criticism or his poetry which constitutes that service to letters which the award is intended to acknowledge. Indeed it is our fancy that those who know one or the other will recognize the propriety of the occasion; those who know both will recognize further in Mr Eliot an exceedingly active influence on contemporary letters.

Influence in itself, however, is no service, and what makes Mr Eliot a significant artist is that his work, of whatever nature, is an indication of how ineffective the temptation to do bad work can, for at least once, become. Few American writers have published so little, and fewer have published so much which was worth publication. We do not for a moment suspect Mr Eliot of unheard-of capacities; it is possible that he neither has been pressed to nor can write a popular novel. But the temptation not to arrive at excellence is very great, and he is one of the rare artists who has resisted it. A service to letters peculiarly acceptable now is the proof that one can arrive at eminence with the help of nothing except genius.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found a discussion of Mr Eliot's poetry, with special reference to his long work, *The Waste Land*, which appeared in THE DIAL of a month ago; in reviewing *The Sacred Wood*, and elsewhere, we have had much to say of his critical work, and may have more. At this moment it pleases us to remember how much at variance Mr Eliot is with those writers who having themselves sacrificed all interest in letters, are calling upon criticism to do likewise in the name of the particular science which they fancy can redeem the world from every ill but themselves. As a critic of letters Mr Eliot has always had preeminently one of the qualifications which he requires of the good critic: "a creative interest, a focus upon the immediate future. The important critic is the person who is absorbed in the present problems of art, and who wishes to bring the forces of the past to bear upon the solution of these problems." This is precisely what Mr Eliot has wished, and

accomplished, in his function as critic of criticism. It is impossible to read the opening essays of *The Sacred Wood* without recognizing that it is from these pages that the attack upon perverted criticism is rising. The journalists who wish critics to be for ever concerned with social laws, economic fundamentals, and the science of psychoanalysis, and never by any chance with the erection into laws of those personal impressions which are the great pleasure of appreciation, would do well to destroy Mr Eliot first; for it is from him that new critics are learning "that the 'historical' and the 'philosophical' critics had better be called historians and philosophers quite simply" and that criticism has other functions, and other pleasures to give.

There is another, quite different sense, in which Mr Eliot's work is of exceptional service to American letters. He is one of a small number of Americans who can be judged by the standards of the past—including therein the body of Occidental literature. It is a superficial indication of this that Mr Eliot is almost the only young American critic who is neither ignorant of nor terrified by the classics, that he knows them (one includes Massinger as well as Euripides) and understands their relation to the work which went before and came after them. There are in his poems certain characters, certain scenes, and even certain attitudes of mind, which one recognizes as peculiarly American; yet there is nowhere in his work that "localism" which at once takes so much of American writing out of the field of comparison with European letters and (it is often beneficial to their reputations) requires for American writers a special standard of judgement. We feel nothing aggressive and nothing apologetic in his writing; there is the assumption in it that the civilized American no less than the civilized German can count Shakespeare and even Poe as part of his inheritance.

When *Prufrock in paper covers* first appeared, to become immediately one of the rarest of rare books (somebody stole ours as early as 1919) Mr Eliot was already redoubtable. Since then, poet with true invention, whom lassitude has not led to repeat himself, critic again with invention and with enough metaphysics to draw the line at the metaphysical, his legend has increased. We do not fancy that we are putting a last touch to this climax; we express gratitude for pleasure received and assured. If pleasure is not sufficiently heightened a word, you may, in the preceding paragraphs, take your pick.



MR ELIOT's command of publicity is not exceptional, and we feel it necessary to put down, for those who care for information, these hardily gleaned facts of his biography. In 1888 he was born in St. Louis; in 1909 and 1910 he received, respectively, the degrees of Bachelor and of Master of Arts at Harvard; subsequently he studied at the Sorbonne, the Harvard Graduate School, and Merton College, Oxford. He has been a lecturer under both the Oxford and the London University Extension Systems, and from 1917 to 1919 he was assistant editor of *The Egoist*. We have heard it rumoured that he is still "A Londres, un peu banquier"; those who can persuade themselves that facts are facts will find much more of importance in the *Mélange Adultère de Tout*, from which the quotation comes; as that poem was written several years ago it omits the names of Mr Eliot's books: *The Sacred Wood*, *Poems*, and *The Waste Land* (not to speak of the several volumes later incorporated in *Poems*) and omits also the fact that Mr Eliot is now editor of *The Criterion*, a quarterly which we (as it were *en passant*) hereby make welcome. The most active and, we are told, the most influential editor-critic in London found nothing to say of one of the contributions to the first number except that it was "an obscure, but amusing poem" by the editor. We should hate to feel that our readers can judge of the state of criticism in England by turning to the first page of our November issue and reading the same poem there.

## THE THEATRE

IN addition to the most distressing acting in the most puffed of plays by the accepted best of our actors and actresses, I have seen during the past month three perfect minutes by Harry Kelly in a musical comedy with the unbearable and "imbillivibil" title of *SPRINGTIME OF YOUTH*. I am therefore not in despair of the future; I despair only of those who do not recognize the Kellys.

LOYALTIES fulfilled the hopes expressed here a month ago, and what is more astonishing was very much what the reviewers said it was, an adult, intelligent play. In the mere fact that the rather large cast was a unit, that each actor played in a definite relation to each other actor, the piece is better done than any other I have seen, or can now recall, of this year's products. It differs in extreme, in this respect, from *TO LOVE* in which Miss Grace George and the Messrs Warwick and Trevor each acted in solitude, and each badly; it did not surprise me at all to learn that Mr Trevor dislocated his collar each night as an evidence of emotion; Miss Ruth Chatterton in *LA TENDRESSE* weakens at the knees and slouches through the end of the "big" act for much the same reason. Mr Heywood Broun has said that most of our *ingénues* think that innocence is something you do with the neck, or words to that excellent effect; the methods of our leading players aren't a bit better.

What causes an amateur of light entertainment an acute distress (leaving us inconsolable by even the worst moments of serious acting) is the failure of so brilliant an institution as the *MUSIC BOX REVUE*. It has its moments, yes; but it also has its hours, and in those hours nothing happens but the display of the dynamics of the stage—I mean the use of the elevator and the trap-door. There are silks and draperies, but they also are hoisted and spread and exploited with skilful mechanism. It is necessary for plays of this sort to be funnier than this one is; Mr Clark is very good, though not as good as Mr Kelly; but willing as I am to live on bits and scraps in unpretentious musical comedy, I am spoiled for this sort of thing by the composed excellence of the first *MUSIC BOX*. Mr

Berlin isn't up to himself, except in one number, *Pack Up Your Sins and Go to the Devil*, and that is borrowed in theme from *Sweet Angelina*. The use of the material, however, is so beautiful that the borrowing is justified.

In the way of production, production, and nothing but, *THE WORLD WE LIVE IN* is a triumph. Nothing so convinces me of the utter banality of the stage as its most effective scenes; for in one of them we have the war-lord of the ants interrupting a prayer to God in order to send another regiment to destruction and this is not only effective, it is actually *good*! It's exactly the sort of thing one meets in the arts and dismisses with a laugh; it isn't exactly what is accomplished in *Gulliver's Travels*, where the simplification is the same, but the method infinitely more delicate. In place of delicacy the production of this play (it is the Capek *Life of the Insect* done over by Owen Davis, produced by Mr Brady, with chief honours to Mr Lee Simonson for reproducing and adapting and departing from the original *décor*) set sheer skill. I have not been so made satisfied by the inner workings of the theatre for a long time.

Pirandello's *SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR* is another matter. The problem of production was exceptionally complicated, the solution became too involved with special bits of acting to be altogether clearly seen. But the play itself, once one got over the unilluminated programme note which accused Mr Pirandello of wondering whether the theatre was adequate to produce so commonplace a piece as the interior tragedy, was simplicity itself. That the semi-Scandinavian, semi-French tragedy out of which the *Six Characters* walked was only an excuse for the elaborate and wisely bewildering framework was, I should hope, obvious. It seemed to be so to the producer, at any rate.

*THE 49-ERS* added considerably to the unhappiness of the month. It is the sort of show which should always be talked about—it usually is—and never produced. Too late for verification comes the rumour that the show has much improved. By so much, then, it is good.

G. S.

## MODERN ART

**W**HAT I have been praying for for many years has now been granted and to my surprise I find I do not like it particularly after all. We have begun shipping artists to Europe. The London Outlook has nabbed our Boardman Robinson and he is soon to begin firing broadsides of caricature into the already diminished ranks of the British aristocracy for a large salary. I swell with pride even as I write it, but collapse again into rebellion as I put the period to the sentence. For the supply of Boardman Robinsons in the country is limited. Upon sober second thought it really seems as though it would have been better to have waited with our exportations until we had had a few more Boardman Robinsons on hand.

For we had just lately begun to like him ourselves. We had just lately begun to know him. The elder Pierpont Morgan once said, when pressed by a Washington committee, that credit was founded upon character, and perhaps it is not too much to say that fame is founded upon it, too. Back of the drawings that were published in *The Liberator*, it began to be generally believed, was a character, a person of incorruptible probity and generous ideals. The caricatures, as caricatures, lacked the biting definition that made, a generation earlier, the work of Nast a force in politics, and scarcely scratched the surface of the equanimity of the present brand of voters. But what the drawings lacked in directness was more than balanced by spiritual qualities. People of delicate susceptibilities were found responding to them irrespective of their own party affiliations. *The Liberator*, itself, gained in tone through him for that reason. Indeed, it was the realization that Robinson insisted upon working for that review that first planted the idea of the artist's deep-rooted sincerity in the public mind. Heaven knows, doubtless, how *The Liberator* exists, but the public doesn't, and there have been put forward so many curious ways of raising money for *The Liberator*, such as *Liberator* balls, *Liberator* book-shops, et cetera, that the suspicion has grown that immense sums of money have not been available for its contributors, and that Boardman Robinson, among others, was sacrificing himself for his

principles. Which is noble, of course, and not at all a bad sort of reputation to have, but upon the whole, in this country, rare.

Personally, I was slow to take on Boardman Robinson and all the time that he caricatured for the Tribune I stood aloof. The very thing that enchanted the young people—"so like Rodin, so like Forain"—chilled me, for I preferred to take my Forain straight and undiluted. Later came the biblical series, imbued, so the now quite exalted young admirers said, with the true stuff, but which failed to put the fear of God into this perhaps calloused heart. They seemed theatric. Religion *à la* Belasco. Of course, as Evangeline Booth says, it doesn't matter how you get your religion so long as you get it. But I—there's no use longer trying to conceal it—being a sentimentalist, never really fell for Boardman until he began to publish love songs. Love drawings, I mean, of course. The poor dear was preaching, I suppose. He meant to reform us, probably. So much is being done for the sex-life in these days. But he succeeded merely in being beautiful. The young men clasping maidens and defying the world in rape-of-the-Sabine attitudes made perfectly satisfactory compositions and seemed resoundingly eloquent.

All this, however, in regard to Boardman Robinson's past may not assist our British cousins much with his present—and that was the object of this writing. They may, though, get a reassuring line upon him if they look up a back number of THE DIAL and find his analysis of the present American minister at the court of St James. Boardman ought to have that caricature engraved upon his visiting cards whilst in London. It would give him instantly the entrée to the best sort of minds there. The best sort of minds there are fully persuaded that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark and that the cure or the surgeon-specialist for their ills must come from these States. Convinced of our invincible superpracticality they are nevertheless brought face to face with our astounding representative! Hence, a confusion of thought that it may be Boardman's first job to dissipate.

The expected zip is missing from the first exhibition of the new society called, awkwardly enough, The Salons of America. It will be recalled that the curtain rang down darkly last spring upon a scene of confusion in the rooms of the Independent Artists. The officers of that institution quarrelled among themselves. It was

something about publicity. John Sloan and Walter Pach were caught red-handed permitting editors of *Vanity Fair* and similar publications to publish photographs of their works, and *Vanity Fair* and similar publications were caught red-handed in refusing to become interested in the lesser known candidates for fame arriving in these parts from Davenport, Iowa, although already equipped with photographs for the purpose. It was a sordid tale, although having, myself, seen the photographs of the paintings of the new sport people, I could understand *Vanity Fair's* reluctance to

Not but that Walter Pach may not be a very particular villain, too. Publicity seems to be a horrid temptation and few there are that withstand it. But somehow the crime, as crimes go in these days, failed to take deep hold upon me. In my easy-going American fashion I was perfectly willing to hush the matter up and say no more about it and to maintain, outwardly at least, a show of relationship with John Sloan, Walter Pach, and the Society of Independents. But not so the stern believers in the absolute partition of the press among the lowly. The last should be first, said they, and instantly. It is a grand idea now that you come to think of it. But how is it to be carried into effect? That's the question.

At all events they started a new society and now we have it with us. It happens to provide a slow show and that's unfortunate. It announces a second for next spring that may be better. Let us hope so. In the meantime I would like to emphasize what I must have said before, that there seems to me to be no necessity for a duplicate Society of Independents. One of those is enough, and it should be as large and as merry as possible. It is the one show that I like to have big. There is however a crying need for an organization of another sort, a society to be recruited from the Independents, and to express the aspirations of those who become recognized as the leaders of the oncoming hordes. The hordes may be strictly confined where they belong, in the Independent enclosures. Also, there need be no energy wasted among the societies attacking each other, since it is absurd for two societies to struggle for the same task. The Salons of America could be this new society if it wished.

HENRY MCBRIDE



## MUSICAL CHRONICLE

**T**HE Life of Palestrina,<sup>1</sup> by Zoë Kendrick Pyne does not differ radically from the sort of biographies of illustrious composers and Elizabethian dramatists to which we are used. The authoress of the new Life of the great Roman composer has followed in the good old sad old way of not accepting the work of the artist as the first great fact of his life, of not making an analysis of it the centre of her picture. Instead, she has placed facts gleaned from registers of churches and choirs, et cetera, in the foreground. Some descriptions of Palestrina's music are included, to be sure. But trivial detail and unnecessary speculation outbalance it in quantity. For example, on page 3, we are given to read:

"It may be conjectured that he (Pierluigi) showed early signs of musical genius, and, for that reason, may have been placed in the choir of St Agapito, there to acquire the knowledge of those liturgical melodies destined to shape his mind to its great end. But, whether climbing the steep streets to the overhanging *Rocca*, listening as he went, to the *stornelli* sung by the peasants in the meadows below—those melodies of untold antiquity—or in the cathedral, following the hand beat of the choir-master as he chanted the long alleluias on an Easter morning, it is certain that all musical sound was to him of deep significance, and that he was storing up impressions to be used hereafter for the greater good of his fellow-man."

On page 153 we read: "On December 5—Cardinal Ugo Buoncompagni of Bologna assumed the tiara as Gregory XIV. Gorgeous ceremonial, stately Requiem, alternating with the street-rows which invariably attended the election of the Pontiff, Te Deums and shouts of *Evviva il Papa*, centered around the spot where Pierluigi had his dwelling—namely, the precincts of the Vatican—from which he concluded in this year the purchase of a vineyard in the neighbourhood of Rome." But of the *Missa Brevis*, we are told

<sup>1</sup> The Life of Palestrina, by Zoë Kendrick Pyne (12mo, 232 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2.50).

no more than "This beautiful mass is founded on one by Goudimel, Audi Filia. It is one of the best known to-day on account of its moderate length—It takes its title from the first note (breve) of the theme, and is in transposed Ionian."

To be sure, Miss Pyne has made a fairly scholarly assemblage of the facts gathered. The picture of Pierluigi left by her is co-ordinated and reasonable. She has not repeated the ancient legend that it was the beauty of Palestrina's music which dissuaded the Council of Trent from excluding all music other than plain-song from the services of the Church. She has not sought to make a Christ of her subject by giving exaggerated importance to her account of the miserable intrigues directed all during his life against Palestrina by his fellow-musicians in the Papal choirs. She has preferred a certain dryness to gratuitous melodrama. Indeed, because of restraint, Miss Pyne has the better succeeded in persuading us of the correctness of the picture as far as she has drawn it. In spite of her gallant contention that some of Pierluigi's persistent misrepresentations of the extent of his poverty are excusable for the reason that they were made to elicit from Pope Sixtus V and from the Gonzagas some of the same assistance in obtaining publishers for his works as that given by the Duke of Bavaria to Orlando di Lasso, or by the court of Spain to Vittoria, the Roman issues from her hands an avaricious Italian peasant. But this trait, like the traits of his almost astrally incorporeal music, only serves the better to place him.

And many bits of good criticism are scattered through the texture of the book. There is a very fine description of the Mass of Pope Marcellus. There are supplementary chapters on the characteristics of the Roman School in Sixteenth Century Art; and an Index to the Masses of Palestrina. Particularly just is the comparison made between the music of the Roman school and that which we call modern. "The moment instruments were employed to accompany part-singing, the perpendicular chord was all-important; the strong and weak beat controlled the accents; and a certain quality of indefiniteness which was as the very breath of the unaccompanied polyphonic school was gone for ever. Paradoxical as it may seem, modern music, while gaining in subtlety, colouring, and weight, has lost in size. An unaccompanied six-part mass (obviously there is no restriction in the multiplication of voices) is practically im-

measurable, for it is confined in no limit of rhythmic beat, thematic structures, or chromatic formula. Not that there is no beat, no structure, no key-scheme; such a course would result in chaos; but the beat is not limited by regularly recurring bar-lines, or the structure by fixed patterns—if the expression be allowed—of development. . . . The uniformity of timbre through the sole employment of the human voice, the absence of percussion, or of violent changes of any sort, create an atmosphere on which the spirit floats.” And if passages of this sort occur too rarely in the book to give us any great sense of the life within Pierluigi, and to create a veritable biography of the man, they occur sufficiently often to recall to memory instances we have heard the works of the great Palestrinian, and to spread the awareness of the human greatness expressed in them.

The following announcement has been sent us by the International Composer's Guild, of 29 West 47th Street:

“The International Composers' Guild was organized primarily last season to liberate the composer from the existing conditions, which generally hamper his work being presented at all or in an ideal manner. The effects he is to produce and the progress he is to make in his art are normally conditioned by self-interest of managers, the traditions of most conductors and performers, and the prejudices of a public accustomed to such traditions and limitations and oblivious of the fact that each new conception demands new means of expression and that the ‘classics’ of today were the innovators and path breakers of yesterday.

“It is the aim of the International Composers' Guild to give the living composer the greatest degree of independence and opportunity. Prejudices do not exist in the selection of works to be performed. It has a fixed program in its devotion to contemporary composition, regardless of school.

“The International Composers' Guild is in close alliance with similar organizations recently formed at its instigation in different cities of Europe. These organizations pursue precisely similar objects, but each is independent, although proceeding along parallel lines.

“For the carrying on of its work the International Composers'

Guild depends upon the interest and aid of competent singers and instrumentalists. It earnestly hopes for the support of the musical public.

"Last season the Guild gave three concerts in New York, at the Greenwich Village Theater. In these concerts the twenty-seven composers represented were of nine nationalities. The series was undertaken without guarantees and was carried through without a deficit.

"The International Composers' Guild, Inc., announces its second series of concerts in New York. They will be given in the Klaw Theater, in 45th Street on the evenings of December 17th, 1922, January 21 and March 4, 1923. The members and subscribers are invited to attend a series of lectures on 'The Music of To-day,' which will be given under the auspices of the International Composers' Guild.

"1st program—December 17, 1922: works by Busoni, Honegger, Lourié, Ruggles, Turini. Madame Maeterlinck, soloist.

"2nd program—January 21, 1923: Schoenberg—'Pierrot Lunaire'—first time in America. Eva Gauthier, soloist.

"3rd program—to be announced.

"The following composers have contributed for the Guild programs:

"Bela Bartok, Arnold Bax, Alban Berg, Alfredo Casella, Acario Cotapos, Carl Engel, Louis Gruenberg, Eugene Goossens, Arthur Honegger, D. E. Ingelbrecht, Zoltan Kodaly, Walter Kramer, Ethel Leginska, G. Francesco Malipiero, Roland Manuel, Darius Milhaud, Vitezlav Novak, François Poulenc, Serge Prokofieff, D. Rudhyar, Carlos Salzedo, Lazare Saminsky, Erik Satie, Florent Schmitt, Arnold Schoenberg, Albert Stoessel, Igor Stravinsky, Karol Szymanowsky, Edgar Varèse, Anton von Webern, Vaclav Stepan, Ch. Koechlin, Turini, Ruggles, Lourié, Busoni."

PAUL ROSENFELD

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